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Eliminating VIOLENCE in Hockey

A report by
Bernie Pascall
assisted by Sharon White

Commissioned by the
Honourable Ian G. Waddell
Minister Responsible for Sport

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BRITISH COLUMBIA
Ministry of Small Business,
Tourism and Culture

B.C. AMATEUR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

Protecting BC's Children.
SPORT Safe

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Executive Summary

In December 1999, veteran sport broadcaster Bernie Pascall was commissioned by B.C. Sport Minister Ian Waddell to report on violence in hockey - its extent and contributing factors - and provide recommendations which could be used to expand the province's SportSafe program to include a violence prevention module. SportSafe's first module addresses harassment and abuse in sport.

In partnership with the B.C. Amateur Hockey Association, public forums were held February to April, 2000 in Quesnel (in conjunction with the B.C. Winter Games), Prince George, Kamloops, Castlegar, Nanaimo, Victoria and Richmond. These forums allowed parents, players, coaches, officials, league administrators and others to share their comments, concerns and recommendations in respect to hockey violence. As well, about 130 young players from atom to midget level hockey were interviewed in groups and individually. Information was also gathered through more than 560 surveys, interviews with National Hockey League players including Alexander Mogilny, Mattias Ohlund and Bobby Orr, NHL referees Lloyd Gilmour and Malcolm Ashford, sports sociologists and medicine professionals and through an extensive review of literature and reports.

Those who attended and contributed to these discussions demonstrated a readiness and commitment to improve the game of hockey and ensure that Canada's national sport continues to promote fun, safety and positive attitudes. The findings and recommendations of this report will be distributed to the BCAHA, the Canadian Hockey Association and the National Hockey League.

Findings

While there is a consensus that a level of aggression and intensity is inherent to hockey, there is growing concern about player safety and increasing levels of violence in amateur hockey. Fighting is not necessarily an issue - it is banned in minor hockey and dealt with appropriately - it's the illegal stickwork, hitting from behind and violent outbursts that are the greatest concerns. Adults were particularly concerned with harmful influences - aggressive parents, "hard line" coaching styles and negative NHL role models - from which their kids are learning unacceptable behaviour. Hockey has created a culture where certain violent acts that are punishable if they occurred on the streets are "part of the game" when occuring on the ice.

The most consistent complaint from players and adults was about officiating - inconsistency in rule interpretation and application, inexperienced and too-young officials, disrespect for officials and a resultant inability to retain them.

Body checking in early age levels of hockey was also a contentious issue. Most of the players and public forum participants, without prompting, advocated introducing body checking earlier than the bantam level. Proponents reasoned that because kids don't know how to give and take a hit, they are more likely to resort to illegal tactics. Conversely, medical professionals say the risks of injury with early introduction of body checking warrant the ban of body checking in younger age levels.

Recommendations

Throughout the forum discussions and interviews there was never a sense that there was one explicit cause of violence in hockey. Solutions will therefore require commitment and action from various sources - parents, coaches, officials, players and all levels of administration.

From this understanding comes 14 all-embracing recommendations including a commitment to fair play programs, establishing parent contracts and fair play committees; zero tolerance for violence policies for facilities; enhancing coach and official education; reducing game versus practice ratio (thereby focusing greater emphasis on skill development); establishing a two-referee (or variation) system in minor hockey; and calling on the NHL to support coach and official mentorship and training programs.

Project Leader

Veteran sportscaster Bernie Pascall is a former BCTV sports director and anchor and has provided play-by-play for the NHL Vancouver Canucks, Memorial Cup championships, and world hockey championships. He has also covered six Olympic Games including the historic 1980 Lake Placid Olympic game between Russia and the United States.

Associations include, American Sportscasters Association, Football Reporters of Canada, NHL Broadcasters Association, Honourary Chair of the B.C. Hockey Hall of Fame, member of the Selection Committee for the B.C. Hockey Hall of Fame, B.C. Sports Hall of Fame and Sport BC Athlete Awards. He's a long-time member of ACTRA (Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists) and Union of B.C. Performers. He's a past recipient of the *TV Week Sportscaster of the Year Award* and has been named Western Canada winner of the *ACTRA Foster Hewitt Award* and four-time National ACTRA finalist as *Sportscaster of the Year*.

He remains active in community events throughout B.C. in the promotion of amateur and professional sports as a guest speaker, director of ceremonies and continues to represent BCTV as a special events representative. He and his family remain involved in various levels of minor hockey in B.C. and Canada.

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A Report on

Eliminating
Violence in Hockey

in British Columbia

By Bernie Pascall
assisted by Sharon White

Background

In hockey, violence has been a part of the game's culture for decades. The acceptance of fighting, endorsement of the "good penalty", disrespect for officials, intimidation and anti-social role model behaviour, along with many other factors, are all accepted as "part of the game."

Hockey enjoys tremendous popularity in British Columbia. The B.C. Amateur Hockey Association includes more than 60,000 players, 4,500 referees, and 20,000 volunteers. The game has changed - coaching education programs are producing better technical coaches, equipment has improved significantly, and athletes have become bigger, faster and stronger. As well, the unprecedented expansion of the National Hockey League in recent years and the popularity of all-sports channels, has brought hockey into our living rooms like never before.

With the game's popularity, changes and increased exposure comes potential for unnecessary aggression, fighting and violence. As a result, the consequences of violence in sport in many cases have become increasingly severe. Incidents of head injury and concussion are on the rise, spinal trauma is more frequent and many games and practices are lost to athletes due to less severe, but preventable, injury.

The B.C. government is addressing the issue of violence in sports through expansion of its SPORTSafe program. SPORTSafe was established in 1997 as a modular program designed to create a safer environment for kids in sports. The first module developed under this program addressed the issue of harassment in sport and was launched shortly after the Sheldon Kennedy/Graham James incident became public. Through public awareness, education, the development of effective harassment policy and procedures, distribution of a Coach's Game Plan and a Volunteer Screening Model for Sport, it is more difficult to commit acts of harassment or sexual abuse in sport and get away with it than at any time in the past.

In December 1999, The Honourable Ian Waddell, B.C. Minister responsible for Sport, appointed me to report on violence in hockey in British Columbia and provide recommendations to help develop SPORTSafe's second module - Addressing Violence in Sports. I accepted this responsibility and challenge eagerly, particularly because of my love of hockey and lifelong involvement in the sport as a player, coach and broadcaster. As a parent, I've watched two sons develop through amateur hockey - as well as baseball, soccer and rugby. My sons played in the BC Junior Hockey League, NCAA hockey and Western Hockey League - one was drafted by a NHL team and played professional hockey. Like the scores of people I met, interviewed and listened to during this project, I love hockey and feel it's the best game around.

Why now?

While this study has been in the planning stages since September 1999, the February 21 Marty McSorley incident during a National Hockey League game - two weeks after this project was announced - certainly turned the spotlight on violence in sport. The Boston Bruin "enforcer" in the final moments of the game in Vancouver, took his stick and violently hit Canucks Donald Brashear over the head, sending the Vancouver player to the ice with a concussion. McSorley was later suspended for the rest of the season (with the NHL to review at the start of the 2000-2001 season) and charged by the Vancouver police with assault. Just as the Graham James' incident did a few years ago, this brazen attack incited discussion, concern and increased reflection on violence in all levels of hockey and its influence on young players.

There have been numerous studies and reports (some referenced in the bibliography) over the years, most notably the *1974 Investigation and Inquiry into Violence in Amateur Hockey* by William R. McMurtry, Q.C. done on the issue of aggression and violence in sport. While some of the same attitudes and experiences in hockey that applied then still apply, there hasn't been substantial change. As well, in the past few years, there has been increased media attention on violence in sport - in particular, anti-social behaviour by professional sport figures, and violence inside and outside of the sport arena involving high-profile athletes. This focus - a spotlight on negative role models for kids - contributes to unacceptable behavior becoming acceptable. This report, and the SportSafe module, which will result from its findings and recommendations, will attempt to reverse this trend by providing the sport community with appropriate tools and strategies.

Finally, hockey, through its Open Ice Summit in August 1999, made a commitment to positive change. The Summit's 11 recommendations included a call for a public awareness campaign on respecting the games, rules and other participants. Other recommendations focused on skill development. This report will support these Summit objectives.

Why Hockey?

Hockey is Canada's national sport - its popularity and participation level in British Columbia is very broad. Membership in organized hockey represents diverse age groups, regions and skill levels as well as both genders - this brings varied perspective to the issue of violence in sports and encourages open discussion.

The B.C. Amateur Hockey Association and the Canadian Hockey Association have made significant progress in addressing this issue (e.g. rule changes, "Stop" patches on back of jerseys). These initiatives, as well as the success of the CHA's Speak Out harassment and abuse prevention program, demonstrates commitment and leadership in helping to create a safer environment for children and youth. SportSafe will build on this success and provide a violence prevention module for use by all sports. Links which will help support BCAHA's response to recommendations of the Open Ice Forum will also be explored.

Finally, hockey, like football and lacrosse, is a contact sport. Contact sports, by nature, are generally aggressive and this aggression has the potential to inflict injury. One of this project's primary goals is to prevent these injuries while retaining the attractiveness of the game.

Report Objectives

- To summarize current attitudes, beliefs and perceptions regarding hockey violence in B.C.
- To report on the scope of violence in British Columbia amateur hockey
- To provide a summary of current literature, research and statistics in respect to violence in sports
- To provide recommendations to the B.C. Sport Minister and the BC Amateur Hockey Association to address this issue and;
- To serve as a guide for the Sport and Community Development Branch's development of a SportSafe violence prevention program.

Definition

Violence in sport can incorporate or be influenced by a wide range of activities - from trash talking to unruly fan behaviour to deliberate physical assaults to fighting.

For the purpose of this report, however, violence will be defined as: *Violence in sport is physical assault or other physically harmful act that is intended to intimidate or cause physical pain or injury to another.*

Terms of Reference

- The findings and recommendations of this report will address all levels of minor hockey in British Columbia, from pee wee to midget.
- While there are references to professional hockey, this document does not attempt to impact or pass judgement on violence in the National Hockey League except as it relates to influencing minor hockey.
- This report deals with violence, aggression and anti-social behavior within the game of hockey and as such, will not adequately deal with fan violence or violence outside of the game by hockey players. The author does acknowledge that there could be real or perceived linkages between on-ice and off-ice violence, however, it is hoped that the findings and recommendations of this report will indirectly address these societal issues.
- While this report will focus on amateur hockey, its findings and recommendations will be considered in developing a broader SportSafe violence prevention program for all sports.
- The theme of this report is ensuring that British Columbia kids participate in a sport environment which emphasizes fun, safety and skill development.

Investigation and Research Methodology

About 160 parents, coaches, officials, league administrators and community members participated in public forums held in seven communities - Quesnel (in conjunction with the 2000 BC Winter Games), Prince George, Kamloops, Castlegar, Nanaimo, Victoria and Richmond. The forums were relatively unstructured, allowing for open discussion about participants' concerns, experiences and recommendations.

After giving a brief introduction to the project and how the forum discussions would be used, I left the floor open to the participants, with little moderation on my part except to bring discussions back to the topic when they got off track. A BCAHA district representative attended all forums, except for Castlegar (BCAHA representative was not available), to answer any questions directed to the Association, however, this representative did not attempt to direct discussions one way or the other.

Throughout this project, I interviewed about 130 young hockey players. For logistic reasons, players were interviewed in groups in Prince George, Kamloops, Nanaimo and Victoria. The groups consisted of anywhere from two to 30 boy and girl players from pee wee, atom, bantam and midget levels with each age group interviewed separately. In Castlegar, Quesnel and Vancouver, I was able to interview female and male players individually. In all cases, no adults were present during interview sessions. Whether the subjects were interviewed individually or as part of a group, their comments were extremely candid and valuable. Interviewees were asked to define what they see as violent acts, relate their experience with violence at their age level in hockey and in other sports they are involved with, provide recommendations to prevent violence and comment on the influence of parents, other players, coaches, officials and the National Hockey League on their and other players' behaviour.

Data on public perception, experience and recommendations in respect to hockey violence was also collected through surveys for players, parents, officials and coaches which were distributed in the weeks prior to the public forums and available on the Sport and Community Development Branch's website (copy of surveys are in appendix 4). More than 350 general surveys (completed by parents, players, officials, coaches and league administrators) and 215 player surveys (of all minor hockey levels with about 40 per cent from female players) were returned to the branch.

Written submissions were also accepted by mail, fax and email.

I also interviewed current and former National Hockey League players including Mattias Ohlund, Bobby Orr, Guy Lafleur and Alex Moligny, coaches and officials and consulted with sports sociologists, sport medicine professionals, media and hockey administrators.

Findings

I don't think the problems or concerns we have today are much different from many of the problems we've faced in amateur sport over the last 30 years. However, I did find it encouraging, in almost every community I visited, that people took the time to address their concerns about the extent of violent behaviour in hockey and other sports. The feedback from the forums was tremendously thoughtful. Every participant had the opportunity to speak their minds, everyone respected each other's opinions and remarks, and everyone was well-prepared - many brought their own reference notes. I found it extremely heartening that parents, coaches, officials, players, volunteers and league representatives from across the province all held a strong interest in making their sport safer and above all, better.

All facets of hockey violence were discussed - coaching, officiating, player development, parental, media and NHL influence - none of which were deemed as the sole catalyst for an increase in violence, but in combination, have all contributed. Throughout the forums and interviews, and after reviewing written and survey submissions, a number of key themes became apparent:

For all "Intents" and Purposes

Fighting is not nearly an issue in minor hockey as the media (those following the NHL, that is), or those outside of hockey make it out to be. Fighting, in fact, for the most part is quickly and effectively dealt with in the amateur ranks. You fight and you're out. It's the checking from behind, illegal stickwork and the general abuse and anti-social behaviour displayed by players, parents, coaches, and yes, even referees and officials, which are regarded as the most prevalent and worrisome form of violence in hockey.

While the general consensus was that a certain level of aggression, intensity and rough play was inherent in hockey - and should remain so - there appears to be a marked escalation of deliberate violent behaviour in recent years. One Victoria forum participant described it as "explosive." He said he has seen game suspensions in the South Vancouver Island League rise tenfold in the last three years and the penalty minutes for abusive or assaultive behaviour rise alarmingly.

"What I'm seeing is explosive behaviour," he said. "I know the BCAHA is trying hard to address this, but they don't have the support. There's no respect from the parents, there's no respect for referees or for other players."

He described the worst incident he's seen this past season where a pee wee player, after a referee signalled a penalty, go across the ice and level another kid. "Very few of these kids have a history of this type of behaviour and suddenly they explode," he said. "We put in a complaint to the league president and every one gets behind the kid (offending player)."

The players that I interviewed were very adept at defining what constitutes violence. For the most part, they defined violence as deliberate acts, ones which could easily be differentiated from the inherent intensity and speed of the game.

"Aggression is fine," said a Kamloops pee wee player. "There's this thin line that separates aggression from violence. Hitting someone into the boards is aggression. Going all the way to the other end of the ice to hit someone is violent."

A Matter of Respect

"The biggest concern in hockey today is the lack of respect - the lack of respect between players, between the organizations and players and vice versa. There needs to be a change in that direction. Sad things are happening on the ice. It shouldn't be there. It all comes down to a lack of respect."

Guy Lafleur, interview in Victoria

The topic of officiating generated perhaps the most consistent and vociferous feedback during both the public forums and player interviews. The "unapproachableness" of referees; officials who wanted to "control" the game's outcome, rather than its rules and regulations; inconsistency in calling infractions and in rule interpretations; young officials working games with peer players; and retention of referees were major issues. Most of these concerns or considerations lead to a general lack of respect for hockey referees and officials.

A Kamloops pee wee player described an incident where another player hit a young referee over the head with his stick. The referee went down on the ice and started crying. The player was suspended, but this incident clearly shows disrespect for authority. It also speaks to the player's inability to control his emotions.

"He just snapped," said the Kamloops player. "Once he got mad, no one could stop him. In a couple of years, if he was on the streets, he would get an assault charge."

Part of the referees' vulnerability rests with the young ages of entry level referees and linesmen. Many are the same age, or a just a year or two older than the players they officiate. This situation, for the most part, can result simply from the minor hockey system's inability to retain officials. Every year, Canadian hockey loses about 10,000

officials, nearly 30 per cent of the total complement of 35,000. Most leave because of the abuse. Attrition is normal for any segment in sports, or for that matter, other organizations. But in minor hockey, it is this exodus which has captured the attention of the Canadian Hockey Association. Responding to one of the recommendations of the *August 1999 Open Ice Summit*, the CHA has recently launched a public relations campaign aimed at encouraging respect for hockey officials. Judging from the comments from officials, players, and forum participants, this is a good start for a timely initiative.

Castlegar's Dave Murray, BCAHA's Referee-in-Chief doesn't believe B.C.'s attrition rate is as high as 30 per cent. "We've certified 5,000 officials in the province, and this status quo remains pretty steady," he said. And while he doesn't feel that officials leave primarily because of disrespect, he acknowledges that it is a problem in minor hockey.

"I've been in the business for 40 years," he said. "from junior hockey right down. The biggest problem is that no one knows who the official is, or cares. An official comes to the rink, no one acknowledges him or her, no one even offers the officials water during the game."

Murray described a Vancouver Island incident where a referee made a too many men on the ice call in the last few minutes of a game. The other team scored on the ensuing play and won. A league executive went into the referees' dressing room after the game, asked who made the call, said it was the worst call he's ever seen and then told the entire crew that they would never work another game.

For many referees and officials, particularly at early ages, the pressure can be overwhelming. "A referee gets on the ice and his first concern is what is going to come from behind the bench, or from the stands," said a Quesnel public forum participant. "Human nature makes him more worried about the abuse than what's going on on the ice."

Murray says referees are even getting abused by hockey scouts. "You have scouts in the stands yelling at the refs telling them to allow their kids to play."

"In baseball," said a Victoria parent, "umpires get far more respect than hockey. Players get kicked out of the game right away. When you see the Montreal Expos, you don't see the manager kicking dirt on the umpire every day. When you watch NHL hockey, you see it (disrespect) every game."

Many forum participants questioned whether we are throwing young officials into a lion's den, particularly when faced with tremendous abuse from parents.

"Parents in the stands - they don't know what their influence (yelling) does to the kids," said a Nanaimo parent. "They don't have the perspective of what it is like on the ice. How difficult it is to officiate, what officials have to look at (to call a game). Parents have to be educated. Referees are going to clinics, watching game films and seeing what goes on on the ice. Parents don't."

"It takes a 'big' 12-year-old," said a Castlegar parent, "to be able to take on an angry crowd of adults. I don't know how they deal with it. I couldn't. You have to question the rationale behind subjecting young officials to that kind of abuse."

Respect and retention is a double-edged sword. You can't build experience and respect for officials when kids are not sticking around long enough because of abuse. Murray says about 95 per cent of B.C.'s minor league officials are those who have just stepped into the game. "Some of their calls may end up being bogus ones just because of their inexperience," he says.

Lack of respect also appears reciprocal. Many players interviewed spoke of officials' name-calling, swearing, yelling - and otherwise being abusive to players.

"Kids don't have respect for the refs because the refs don't have respect for the kids," said a Kamloops pee wee player. Another player called referees 'grumpy.'

"Officials at the minor leagues are very unapproachable," said a Prince George forum participant. "They come onto the ice and make no contribution afterwards. The official needs to talk to the players and let them know what they are doing wrong."

In a *Systematic Observation of Ice Hockey Referees During Games*, authors Trudel and Cote studied eight youth hockey referees (aged 20 to 35) during 15 games. Almost 45 per cent of these referees' time was spent monitoring the game without interacting, 13 per cent was spent waiting and 40.6 per cent was intervening verbally or with gestures. When the referees intervened, most was for encouraging or to give advice to players. Referees in this study did not perceive their roles as just adjudicating penalties, but as potential educators of morality and fair play principles. This study indicates support of the educational role officials can have and is an instructive model for officials in all levels of hockey.

Murray says communication between referees and players is something the B.C. hockey officials association is struggling with.

"We can't make the refs robotic," he said. "We have to come to grips with this and put it on the agenda. We have players complaining that refs make the call by the rule and don't pay attention to the game situation. The refs become faceless. We need to find a way to teach the refs to talk to the players - to keep the players from getting the penalties in the first place."

British Columbian referees are not alone in being victims of abuse - the problem stretches across the country and as cited earlier, the Canadian Hockey Association is taking steps to address respect issues for officials. Murray, however, says more can be done to encourage credibility in the ranks of officials.

"B.C. has always had referees make it to the National Hockey League - people like Lonnie Cameron, Rob Shick, Brad Lazarowich," said Murray. "Every referee that we have sent in to the nationals or the internationals, B.C. refs have always made it into the medal round. That's because we have an excellent program.

"We have a 12-referee committee in the province who have been trying to install a mentor-officiating program. Skill level and retention would really go forward with such a program - it has worked in some districts," he said. "It's incumbent on our senior guys to remember their roots and help out the young refs."

Murray thinks the NHL should step in to help with official development. "I've talked to some NHL referees and they are very supportive, but their time is very limited. The National Hockey League has to filter things down for sure - they have no choice, particularly when they are moving to a two-referee system and need to develop more referees."

During the forums, there was lots of support for a two-referee system in minor hockey, or at least giving linesmen more responsibility in calling infractions, particularly for calls away from the play. A Nanaimo parent and former player suggested a senior linesmen wearing a yellow arm band that parents, coaches and players could recognize as a secondary referee. This official could primarily be responsible for calling infractions happening away from the puck.

"The referee can't be expected to watch both the main play and the cheap shots at the other end of the ice," he said. "A lot of the violence in hockey is caused by the instigator who is not in the midst of the play, but is down at the other end of the ice and is not caught."

Efforts to retain and attract officials may, however, be diluting the quality of officials. A Nanaimo player said that he went to a referee certification program and while half of the referees failed the test, they all earned certification.

We also need parents, coaches and players to understand and appreciate that official development is just that - development. A Richmond official says that often people don't realize that young officials - just like players - are just learning the ropes. They make mistakes because they aren't perfect.

"They are learning at the same time as the players who are learning. Give them a break," he said. "We're running out of referees at the top level. We've lost 30 to 35 per cent of referees each season. It's not worth it for them because of the abuse. And that's too bad because the future of the game is with the young refs."

Role Models - Beau ideal, or Bad Idea?

Few violent acts in sport are the result of sudden outbursts (see Appendix 1, Causes of Aggression). If that were the case, we'd see substantially more incidents of physical abuse and overly aggressive acts in all sports, from rhythmic gymnastics to ten-pin bowling. Violence and aggression are much more than responses to frustration and outlets for "letting out steam."[1] Fifty per cent of survey respondents when asked if violence is "a part of the game" said this statement was somewhat true; another 12 per cent said they strongly believe in this statement. Notwithstanding that a certain level of aggression is necessary or desirable in any competitive environment, this "violence is part of the game" social conditioning is somewhat unique to hockey. For the most part, particularly in the sport of hockey, aggression and violence is learned behaviour - cultivated and nurtured by a number of influences, not the least of which are the very role models that young players are exposed to - parents, coaches, other players and professional athletes. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Parents

Parents' attitudes and behaviours have a tremendous influence on the atmosphere surrounding sport, where they often get caught up in the excitement of the action, forgetting that sport is for the child's benefit, not their entertainment. Influences of displays of poor sportsmanship by parents are difficult for even excellent coaches to overcome. Although most parents behave appropriately, horror stories of parents attacking, either verbally or physically, officials, coaches, players or other fans are too regularly occurring. Many parents without realizing it, through their actions and words are directly training their child to act overly aggressive and violent. In fact, in some sports they openly approve of it, seeing fisticuffs as a "character building tool."

M.D. Smith, Violence in Sports

Less than one per cent of minor hockey players sign a professional contract, but, as a Prince George forum participant said, "the dream is there for 50 per cent, if not more." Much of the abuse parents level at coaches, referees and players, was attributed by forum participants to this "NHL fantasy." There's a parent at every rink, forum speakers told me, who thinks his/her son or daughter is the next Wayne Gretzky and this sentiment often translates into this parent expecting, or even demanding, special treatment for their child - whether it's more ice time, amnesty from penalties and suspensions or unconditional access to the puck. One player told me of a parent who sits in the stands with a stopwatch recording his son's ice time, and if his son isn't on the ice for the same amount or more time than the other players, he reams out the coach.

A diminutive Quesnel parent told me of her attempts to quiet an abusive parent. "He was over six feet tall - there was no way he was going to listen to me tell him to shut up," she said.

Thankfully, the questionable behaviour of parents at games is reflective of a minute, albeit vocal, group that puts too much pressure on their youngsters to succeed. Players said a lot of the fun is stolen from them by the parents who simply can't watch their kids playing the various sports without believing they are watching the next superstar of that particular sport.

"Sometimes you feel that you are playing for your parents," said a Victoria player. "They are egging you on. I want to play my own game."

Players also mentioned they were embarrassed by parents' actions, not necessarily their own parents (parents hammering the glass at hockey rinks, yelling at referees). From my personal observations in these interviews, I don't think it's a major problem, but the fact some young players made a point of addressing the issue is enough to be concerned.

One undeniable issue with abusive parents, as described in an earlier section of this report, is their impact on referees and linesmen. A referee's ability to control on-ice activity is severely impeded when he/she is distracted by what is going on in the stands. Referees - particularly young ones - have little experience or recourse to deal with parents.

"I don't know of many officials in any sport who has the guts to kick out a parent," said Nanaimo's Lloyd Gilmour, a former NHL referee. "We need the official to go to the coach and tell him that he won't officiate until the stands are cleared. We need to take this decision away from the 12-year-old to someone in the position to kick someone else out. Let the adults do this. The home team should have this authority."

"There's nothing in the rules that allows a referee to eject an abusive parent from the rink," said a Richmond participant. "I know it happens, but there's nothing that gives a ref the right to do so."

"At one game, one player started to pummel another player," said another Richmond parent. "When the referee pulled him off, the player put his arms up in victory and the parents cheered him. This was a pee wee game!"

Referees, forum participants feel, should be supported by the league and coaches when dealing with abusive parents. "There should be nothing stopping a referee from going to a coach and having that coach kick the parent out," said a Kamloops parent.

Victoria forum participants went so far as recommending a parent contract be signed by parents, coaches and players at the beginning of the season. If a parent doesn't abide by this contract, they're out, said the forum participants.

Ed Mayert, BCAHA officer at large, says the Association is looking at arena contracts. "We've encouraged the minor hockey associations that when they rent the ice, they rent the building," he said. "This gives them control over what happens in the stands. The worse thing that can happen for a parent is to be kicked out by a 14-year-old."

A facility contract could be one tool for sport organizations. Spectator abuse and violence has led the city of Hamilton to institute a violence "zero tolerance" policy for its recreation facilities. This policy, while it does not address violence or abuse on the ice or field of play - which should be effectively addressed through the game's or league's rules - give facility staff the right to eject unruly spectators and facility users.

Coaches

Kids aren't born to be violent, they are shown to be violent."

Castlegar parent

There is no question that a coach can be a significant influence for players. By definition, and in practice, a coach is an educator and a mentor. An athlete's style of play, skills, game - and even life - philosophy, are largely influenced by his/her coach. This responsibility is recognized in no small part by the CHA and BCAHA through their commitments to the National Coaching Certification Program and the Speak Out program, and by coaches we surveyed.

Similar to referee certification and clinics, the BCAHA and CHA have mandatory certification requirements and a highly-structured education programs for their coaches. As well, the Speak Out harassment and abuse prevention training program for coaches has been well-embraced by the BCAHA. The Association has and continues to provide these clinics to coaches throughout the province. Last year, more than 2,000 B.C. coaches attended Speak Out training sessions and by the end of next year 8,000 to 12,000 coaches and other team personnel are expected to have gone through this mandatory training.

Speak Out training, certification and education programs demonstrate the BCAHA's commitment to ensuring that B.C. coaches have the tools and experience to be positive role models for kids - and through the results of our surveys, a majority of coaches - 76 per cent - are considered positive role models for their players.

As in all sports - and in all influences (parental, official, media, professional role models, etc) - there is always room for improvement. Players interviewed said that while their coaches weren't necessarily culpable, they all spoke of coaching in general terms, or could point to examples from other coaches.

"Some coaches won't tell you what's right or wrong," said a Victoria pee wee player. "They know what's right or wrong but won't tell us. Some will tell their players to go out and get a guy."

"Coaches encourage us to play mad, not because it makes us make cheap shots, but because he thinks it will make us play better," said a Kamloops atom player.

Parents at the forums had their own examples. "One coach, in front of all the other players, told my kid to put a dress on," said a Castlegar parent.

"We have one coach who was brutal, verbally abusive, threatening," said another parent, "and my son told me in August that he wasn't sure if he wanted to go back to hockey because this coach was so bad."

A Prince George parent said he's seen coaches who insult and degrade. This behaviour, he says has a huge impact on the kids. "It's a domino effect, how coaches handle themselves impacts how players react," he said.

Forum participants said kids are very impressionable and coaches should be more pro-active in teaching them acceptable behaviour. "What's stopping a coach from dealing with his players when the ref misses a call," said a Victoria parent.

"There's a common phrase, well, this is hockey," said a Quesnel forum participant. "On the street, you don't expect people to get angry and hit someone who cuts him off in traffic, but on the ice, it's encouraged. You have a kid who has never used a stick as a weapon and his coach tells him that he has to go out on the ice and show that he is on the ice. This goes against what the parents try to teach their kids. Kids aren't born to be violent, they are shown to be violent."

Sports, and particularly hockey culture, makes a clear distinction between instrumental aggression - aggression that serves as a means to achieve a particular goal - and hostile aggression - actions intended to harm another who has angered or otherwise provoked an individual. Instrumental aggression is generally described and sometimes accepted as "good penalties." Seventy-four per cent of players surveyed believe that there is such thing as a "good penalty" and referenced such acts as tripping, hooking and interference as acceptable if they prevented breakaways, a goal being scored or protected their goalies. Furthermore, 32 per cent of those surveyed said their coach (or a former coach) had asked them to take a "good penalty." While some may argue that instrumental aggression and good penalties are harmless elements of coaching and playing strategies, this distinction that some penalties are better than others reinforces the "reward" structure of violence. Coach and player approval and acceptance of violent or illegal tactics is a reward and does little to encourage obedience and respect of the games' rules and regulations and fair play principles.

Participants at the Richmond public forum questioned coaches' contributions to violence with their ability to "send players out." The McSorley-Brashear incident was a prime example of this, and they've seen it before in the minor leagues.

"You can see that (violence in a game) is escalating," said one parent. "One of the things that could turn it around would be coaches making better decisions about who to put out in the last three minutes of the game. The coach should not be putting out his hot heads. It's absolutely predictable - you sometimes are watching the last two minutes of a game and you can't believe who they are putting out on the ice."

Increasingly, coaches need more than just an understanding of the game's rules and regulations. More and more, there is a need - and perhaps even an expectation - that coaches and league administrators have to have some level of social worker skills or techniques, and that worries a Kamloops league executive.

"Is hockey creating the violence, or is it created in society and brought to hockey?" asked Kamloops Minor Hockey Association president Debbie Kirkpatrick. "That's the question. Are sport administrators and coaches feeling the pressure that we have to solve societal problems?"

BCAHA president Mike Henderson, a Kamloops teacher, says violence and anti-social behaviour is not just a sport, or a hockey problem.

"We have the same problems in high schools," he said. "Kids are dealing with the same issues in school as they are in the arena. Children and parents have been educated in other systems - school and work - that harassment and abuse is wrong, but why is it acceptable in the hockey arena?"

A Kamloops coach says coaching clinics and conferences aren't enough to equip coaches with what they need to help address societal issues. "I don't know if clinics really help," he said. "Hockey clinics teach you how to coach hockey, they don't teach you how to teach life skills or how to stop violence. Maybe they should."

The BCAHA and CHA are however, providing programs that far exceed what has happened in the past. "Our coaches have to take a series of certification programs, RCMP criminal record checks, Speak Out coaching clinics on harassment and abuse," says Mayert. "We've come a long way to ensure that we have not perfect, but 'humanized' coaches."

The BCAHA in fact has mandatory certification requirements. Every coach must have a minimum Level 1 technical and practical certification and at the competitive level, a coach must upgrade to Intermediate in their second year (Level 2 in technical and practical and Level 1 in theory are minimum requirements). As a coach reaches provincial and national levels, these requirements are higher still - Intermediate is a

minimum requirement. Coaching certification is not mandatory in all sports, though I would think that parents concerned about their child's participation in sports would expect or insist that their child be instructed by a certified coach. The Sport and Community Development Branch, as part of its eligibility criteria for provincial sport organization funding, requires "evidence that an organization has implemented Board-ratified minimum standards for people serving as coaches/instructors at all levels of participation/competition."

Coaches also have to leave the age-old Vince Lombardi "winning isn't everything, it's the only thing" attitude at the door. Thankfully, our coach's survey indicated that while winning is important (62 per cent, compared to 33 per cent who said winning is not important), only one coach rated winning as really important. But every coach valued playing fair as important (19 per cent) or really important (81 per cent). Furthermore, no coach surveyed valued winning games over having fun and all focused on skills development.

Skill development and fair play principles, over win-at-all-costs attitudes, should be a coach's best playing strategy - a game plan that, says an Illinois State University study, is almost guaranteed success. This study reviewed Stanley Cup championship games from the 1979-80 season through the 1996-97 season and showed that in 13 out of those 18 series, the teams with the most penalties for violent behaviour were the losers.

"If players spend a lot of time in the penalty box it disrupts their concentration on the game," said the study's co-author professor Steve McCaw in a press release. "A team's power play units can get fatigued and the overall game plan can be disrupted if certain team members are not playing together. All of those things can jeopardize a team's chances at success."

This study was supported by others presented at the 1993 Annual Convention of American Psychological Association.[2] In one of these studies, researchers looked at the relationship between fighting penalties and winning games in the NHL from 1987 and 1992. They found a significant negative correlation where the larger the number of fighting penalties, the lower the final team standing tended to be.

The Philadelphia Flyers "Broad Street Bullies" was an anomaly to the more-recent trends cited in the Illinois and other studies. A 1974 study of NHL teams by statistician Ron Andrews (cited in *The Relationship between aggression and performance outcome in ice hockey* paper by Widmeyer and Birch) showed that the teams that placed higher in the standings had the most penalties. But this study, says Widmeyer and Birch

was for just one year and was in a year where the Flyers were most successful and most penalized. The author's own 1971-77 study of players and teams in the Ontario University Athletic Association found little discrepancy in penalty minutes between higher and lower ranked teams.

In order to help coaches overcome win-at-all-costs attitudes, become more adept at incorporating lifeskill training into his/her game plan and focus on skill development, coaches, said forum participants, need more support.

A Prince George coach, who dropped out as a player because of the violence, says he learned more from a Douglas College (Vancouver) coaching course by instructor Chris Johnson than he did in the NCCP level 1 and 2 courses. "The BCAHA has a send-home type of certification program," he said. "They need to make more resources available, not just at the beginning of the year, but in the off-season where hockey coaches aren't as busy," he said. "Each organization should have a master coach - someone who can give you feedback and instruction. Sometimes, as a coach you feel like you are being hung out to dry because your association, the parents are not supportive because heavens to bid you want your kids to have fun."

A Prince George bantam coach added there's a real need for everyone to "know the program." "Parents are less and less supportive," he said. "Most coaches are good-hearted people. They don't have enough support. It's always the "fault" of the coaches."

"Coaches are being influenced by the NHL and parents who want to win at any cost," he said. "When the pressure is only on winning we are getting away from what the game is all about. We need the parents, the BCAHA and the CHA to back the people who are promoting fun. We're taking the game away from the kids."

Coaches shouldn't be afraid to be innovative and allow kids to be kids. Adults often impose their overly-competitive values and maturity (mental and physical) on games which are meant to be development and learning opportunities, and for kids, simply fun. The CHA's Four on Four Summer Hockey Skills Program is just one example of how standard games can be modified for more skill development and fun opportunities. Wayne Gretzky, at the Open Ice Summit, talked at length about how the game has outgrown children and called for child-specific equipment and game rules[3].

Giving the game back to the kids with innovative "play" and teachings may go a long way to help refocus sport on fun rather than winning is everything attitudes. From my interviews with players and survey results, I believe it's fun and friendship - not the win-loss column - that keeps kids in the game. As one young player wrote in his player survey, "I think my coach gets more upset when we lose then we do." That's an important cue for coaches.

Players

"Razors on their feet, clubs in their hands"

Prince George public forum participant describing hockey players of today.

As the section on social learning in appendix 1 describes, much of what conditions a young player to act the way he or she does, is through social contacts, and more specifically at this age, influenced by their peers. There's no doubt in most settings, whether it's at school, in the neighbourhood or at the local rink, kids behave to garner attention or as a reaction to other kids. Some groups of players I interviewed readily suggested that they are easily influenced, or feel pressured by their friends or other players.

"Bring it on - that's what they say," said a Kamloops player when describing how players are pressured to fight.

This peer pressure was identified in the player surveys where 35 per cent of respondents said they felt pressured or encouraged by their teammates to fight, hurt someone or be rough and 41 per cent by their opponents; compared to eight per cent by their coach; 10 per cent by parents or spectators and seven per cent by what they see or hear on television (respondents were allowed to identify more than one influence).

Some players are pressured by virtue of their size. A Prince George player said that because he is big, other players expected him to throw his weight around and be more aggressive. A Victoria player said that other kids are always trying to start fights with him because he's the biggest kid on the ice. In our player surveys, 18 players (eight per cent) identified themselves as "enforcers", many of whom said that this role was expected of them because of their size. Most of the enforcers enjoyed their role, while one or two felt pressured to fulfill this role.

Another Prince George player talked about fighting and violence as a means to get the crowd pumped up. A Victoria player said this "crowd" is his biggest influence, and most of them are his peers. "When we have a lot of fans, we hit harder, we put on a

show for them," he said. "I think they influence us more than anyone. Not necessarily parents, most of them were our friends."

Many of the forum participants and some of the players interviewed suggested that "violent" players are just simply "violent" people. Many players and parents could point to a specific player who is a "problem player."

"I've seen some kids in hockey that I'm not sure they belong in hockey," said a Richmond parent. "I'm not sure that having that kid on the ice with a stick is a good idea. They might be better off somewhere else."

Many parents suggested that the expertise and resources of the Ministry of Education and the school system be applied to "bullies" on the ice. "We're encouraging bullying," said a Prince George parent. "In schools there is lots of teaching in bully-proofing. Why not in hockey? Maybe we should be giving the coaches these tools - we should look at what resources education has and apply them to sports."

Ultimately, positive conduct of players has to be reinforced away from the ice. "We need to get the parents in, have them read the riot act to the kids," said a Nanaimo coach. "They have to play a bigger role in disciplining and teaching respect. I have a player who speared someone. I benched the kid and his father got mad at me for taking him off the ice."

"We have a kid who has a problem with aggression in school," said a Castlegar parent, "and his parents put him in hockey hoping to teach him discipline. How and why should a coach have to be responsible for teaching him discipline. Coaches need to have these tools and know how to deal with them (angry or disruptive kids)."

"Trash talking" is also a phenomenon which appears to be filtering down from professional sports to minor hockey. One Kamloops player jokingly suggested that cameras and microphones in the NHL penalty boxes would make hockey better - I suppose so kids could learn new phrases. Whenever I asked a group of players about trash talking, it immediately generated a lot of chatter amongst themselves, so certainly it's a trend that is catching on. "Trash talking gives you a psychological edge, gets the opponents off their game," said a Prince George player. Most players saw trash talking as enjoyable and harmless banter, however, they admitted that they used trash talking to intimidate or were intimidated by such talk.

Is the National Hockey League Leading by Example?

"Let's give them the honest answer," said a parent. "They need to clean up their act."

As mentioned earlier, less than one per cent of minor hockey players make it to the NHL, yet how much influence does the professional league have on amateur sports, particularly for the more than 99 per cent of boys and girls who will never lace up a NHL skate? A lot, says many forum participants.

"Isn't the NHL where the violence starts?" asked one Richmond parent. "My child isn't a violent child, but he's out there pushing and shoving. He can be pretty violent on the ice. Where is he getting that message?"

He could be getting that message through professional sports, says Edmund W. Vaz, who in *The Professionalism of Young Hockey Players*, describes how amateur hockey is conditioned by the desires and needs of professional league hockey.

The NHL, he says, determines the style and content of minor hockey. Despite the low numbers reaching the professional league, one of the main roles of minor hockey, he says, is to groom players for the NHL. This "professionalism" of young players makes youngsters a "commodity."[4]

"This means his behaviour on the ice," he said, "and his values and attitudes are increasingly honed to meet the role obligations of the hockey players. The longer he remains in hockey, the more he is groomed by others," said Vaz.

Coaches and players, says Vaz, as they progress through the ranks, put greater emphasis on the technical skills and specific role requirements that are evaluated by NHL scouts. Aggressiveness, Vaz says, is employed as a general criterion in evaluating players in the NHL, so it is used in the minor and junior leagues.

"Hockey culture is infused with long-established notions of how the game ought to be played," Vaz said, "and since belligerence and aggressiveness are considered essential to the game and illegitimate tactics and deviant skills are included among the necessary criteria for player evaluation and selection, infraction of the rules and violence are unavoidable."

The levels of violence in professional hockey have no doubt increased throughout the years. While old-timers insist that the NHL isn't as bad as it was in their time, there is evidence that suggests that violence has escalated. In *A Social Psychology of Sport*, former University of Lethbridge Professor Gordon Russell describes his analysis of

every single game played in the NHL since 1930. In 1930, there was an average of 22 minutes of penalties given for aggressive incidents (spearing, hitting, fighting) per game. By the 1990s, that figure had almost tripled to 60 minutes per game.

Recently released figures by the NHL, however, suggest that this trend is reversing. A Globe and Mail (Nov. 16, 1999) article reported that violence in the NHL has gone down 30 per cent from two years ago. Penalty minutes were down an average of 10 minutes a game, resulting in 524 fewer power plays. The average was 27.8 minutes a game compared to 37.4 in the 1998/99 season. Colin Campbell, the league's executive vice-president, couldn't, however, attribute this trend to anything and said in the article that there's no way of knowing whether this trend will continue or reverse itself.

Whether violence in the NHL is actually increasing or decreasing is academic, according to public forum participants who say it's the perception or modelling effect that has them worried.

According to a Viewpoints Research poll conducted in April 2000, two-thirds (66 per cent) of British Columbians feel hockey is too violent, 57 per cent said the level of unnecessary violence in hockey has increased in the past few years and 62 per cent said fighting should be banned from hockey. An Angus Reid/CTV survey conducted between March 27 and April 2, 2000, indicated that 71 per cent of Canadians say that "hockey is too violent and the rules should be changed to limit its presence in the game." Three-quarters of Canadians say that compared to a few years ago, the level of unnecessary violence has increased.

In a survey paid for by the National Football League's international division (ROI Sports and Entertainment Research) released October 1999, only 13 per cent of Canadians, and one in five Canadian men, agreed with the statement "I like the violence in sports." Canadians, however, topped the charts in their taste for violence in sports with lower acceptance levels for Australia, Mexico, Japan, France, England, Germany, Netherlands, Spain and Italy (United States was not mentioned).

Our own survey (352 respondents) when asked to comment on "violent behaviour in the level of hockey you are involved in", 22 per cent said "rare", 60 per cent said "occasional" and 18 per cent said "frequent." Concern about hockey violence was mixed (49 per cent said they were concerned about the level of violence, 51 said they were not), depending on the respondent's involvement in hockey. Seventy-three per cent of the parents said they were concerned about the level of violence in hockey and 61 per cent of the coaches, compared to 27 per cent of the male players and 49 per cent of the female players. Less than seven per cent of the respondents said that

violence in sports is lessening in the last few years, compared to 42.5 per cent who said it is "about the same" and 51 per cent who said it is "getting worse."

It should be noted, however, that the respondents in our survey, and in the others cited above were asked to comment on violence in hockey in general, and not specifically to the National Hockey League or minor hockey.

This real or perceived increase in violence is setting a poor example for kids, says parents.

"NHL players have an obligation to the kids," said a Richmond parent. "Kids look up to them. You can't tell the NHL what to do, but it's a damn hard issue for us to deal with this (anti-social behaviour in the minor leagues) when it's accepted in the pros."

Almost 30 per cent of the people we surveyed said that National Hockey League players as role models contribute strongly to the level of violent behaviour in the minor leagues. Twenty-seven per cent of the players surveyed said that they learned how to hit another player illegally by watching NHL players. Furthermore, a majority of survey respondents felt that more pressure should be exerted on professional sports to promote positive values and behaviour (44 per cent said this would have great impact, 25 per cent said this would have some impact).

"We've had the Vancouver Canucks come up to us and ask us what they can do to help promote hockey," said a Richmond league executive. "One thing we need is getting the NHL players who are against violence to speak out - have a few players adopt a minor league team."

"Let's give them the honest answer," said a parent. "They need to clean up their act."

Forum participants also criticized how the league and sports media perceive violence as a "selling point" for its fans.

"Violence is part of hockey because it is truly valued in the game," said a Richmond parent. "The newspaper the other day talked about (Canucks' Donald) Brashear and how he was good for a couple of million dollars because he was a tough guy. The game truly values that kind of behaviour. You can tell the kids all you want, but when they look at what they see on TV, what Don Cherry, what Brian Burke say - they value aggressive players. Kids will emulate behaviour they respect."

"The WWF (World Wrestling Federation), Don Cherry videos, *Rock and Sock 'em* videos are icons," said one parent.

A Prince George parent, in a submission, was extremely critical of Hockey Night in Canada's *Coaches Corner* where Cherry is "continually advocating fighting and violence on our public broadcasting network under the pretence of 'coaching' the kids of all ages who watch Hockey Night in Canada."

The Vancouver Province newspaper recently reported (*Game Misconduct*, March 31, 2000) that the NHL and NHL Players Association have just licensed a video game called *NHL Rock the Rink*. The press release announcing this license said "pair up a goon against goon or have the big guy lay a pile driver, straight-arm or clothesline on a finesse player for a quick and painful annihilation of the opponent." The Province reporter Ed Willes says this is amazing, "Here's the NHL, in the midst of a prolonged public-image nightmare, proudly endorsing a video game which reinforces the sport's worst stereotypes and even creates a few new ones."

The fact that the NHL endorses a product which exploits violence disturbs him, said the reporter, but not nearly as much as "a 10-year-old who plays *Rock The Rink* then watches McSorley's attack on Donald Brashear and thinks it's all part of the same game."

"The video has the NHL logo on it," said a Richmond parent. "Kids pick up a lot from video games, not just hockey videos. I get the impression that kids think that if something goes wrong, I'll just hit the re-set button. We had a kid who virtually learned how to play hockey from a video game."

This attitude that hockey is catering to the entertainment appetite of fans is no less apparent at minor hockey games.

"I spend a lot of time watching the fans of the (Prince George) Cougars," said a Prince George forum participant. "The fans in the stands are completely different in the stands than they normally are - some of these people are my friends. They seem to look for fights in the games as their sole entertainment. It's embarrassing and disturbing."

"The NHL and the Western Hockey League games are not 'sport'," said a Prince George parent. "It's entertainment. It's a business. Kids are influenced. We, in minor hockey, have to separate the two."

Extensive media coverage and public opinion of the McSorley/Brashear incident Feb. 21 and the Niedermayer/Worrell incident a few weeks later, certainly made our project timely. Many parents at the forums expressed outrage at the example McSorley was making for kids. It's encouraging though that while most young players I interviewed recognized this incident as inappropriate action by the pros, almost to a player they told me they didn't agree with the on-ice antics, weren't going to emulate those actions and that there was no room for that type of activity in sports. I find it's a credit to our youth, they are not totally influenced by negative behaviour at the professional level.

The Media Example

"...you see photos of the Clippers game and you see someone dragging someone down when with other sports you see pictures of skill," said a Nanaimo parent.

Like never before the immediacy of media, particularly through television, videos and the Internet, has given kids greater exposure to hockey and unfortunately, its violent aspect.

With the fight for high ratings and advertising revenues, sports coverage and news are big business. Media, in the rush for Nielsen ratings and subscriptions, at times glorifies what they feel "sells." And more and more, what sells is violence.

You only have to look at the intense media attention given to the McSorley incident and broadcasters' comments and enthusiasm when NHL action turns to fighting to recognize their dependence on sports violence. The sport pages are increasingly becoming professional athletes' 'rap sheets' as sport reporters recite anti-social and criminal behaviour by sports stars. It's hard to say whether there are more cases of pro athletes 'gone bad' or whether we are more exposed to these examples by virtue of media sensationalism. I suspect it's a little of both.

But what impact is this sensationalism having on kids who play hockey? A June 1995 MediaWatch submission to the CRTC regarding children and television violence said "The impact of media violence is no longer in question. Thirty years of research overwhelmingly demonstrates that exposure to media violence correlates with increased fear, increased aggression and desensitization to violence."

Parents at public forums detected this desensitization. "Why is hockey one of the few sports where fighting is allowed?" asked a Nanaimo parent. "Media plays a big role. You see photos of the (Nanaimo) Clippers game and you see someone dragging someone down when with other sports you see pictures of skill."

Kids, the parents from all over the province said, watch this on television and unacceptable behaviour becomes acceptable behaviour because the pros are doing it.

Our surveys indicated that minor hockey players are watching more NHL games, primarily to learn from the professional players. When TV broadcasts are not turning the camera away from the fights, just what are the kids learning?

In Robert Yeager's *Season of Shame*, he refers to a federal *Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry* analysis of televised sports violence by University of Alberta psychologist L.M. Leith.

"The more important, powerful and successful and liked the model is, the more a child will imitate them," Leith reported. "Obviously, in the eyes of both children and adults alike, the professional athletes meets all these criteria ... it seems reasonable to assume that an internal vicarious reinforcement occurs as a result of viewing aggressive sports models. If a player acts in an aggressive manner, gets away with it and is then rewarded for his actions, the viewer has learned that aggression pays."

A Russell, DiLullo and DiLullo 1989 study (referenced in Russell's *The Social Psychology of Sport*) showed 14-minute videotapes of a fight-filled game and a spirited, skilfully played game sequence to individuals of two groups. One group was angered, the other treated politely by an associate. When individuals of both groups had the opportunity to aggress against the associate, the only aggression was confined to those individuals who watched the violent hockey game. The study also showed that viewing fast-paced, competitive hockey did not appear to increase viewer aggression and that this hockey was judged to be equally entertaining.

The NHL apparently, does not see this as the case. Bruce Hood in *For the Good of the Game* referenced a report submitted to the 1997 Summit on Hockey by NHL representative Brian O'Neill which said "that fans love to watch fights, the NHL is a business and our business is entertainment."

But Hood argues that fans don't really have a reason for wanting fighting to be part of the game - they just like to watch fighting. If they let fighting into basketball, football and other pro sports, fans would soon vote against removing it too, he says. "But now they seem to get along well without it (in those sports)," he said.

"Fighting is not an integral part of the game - people don't miss it in the Olympics, playoffs or world championships," he writes. "Nobody would miss it in the NHL."

Russell, in *The Social Psychology of Sport*, provides evidence in a 1986 study that violence may not necessarily sell.

"Western Hockey League records provided the data for tests of the relationship between excessively violent games and subsequent attendance," he writes. "Attendance at the next home game following each team's two most violent games during the season were compared to attendance following each teams' two most peaceable matches. Several analyses failed to reveal any association between violence levels and the number of fans passing through the turnstiles. In ice hockey, at least, the promotion or tolerance of player aggression cannot be easily defended on either entertainment or economic grounds."

This media and NHL attitude that violence is what sells isn't helping young kids value skilled, sportsmanlike play.

"Parents realize that it's a contact sport," said a Nanaimo parent, "but there is no other high-profile sport that allows violence and fighting. The media needs to get more involved in education. My kid's team was voted as the most sportsmanlike team, but the local media concentrated on the goals even when I gave them the information about fair play."

Back to Basics - the European model

"Traditionalists insist fighting is part of the game, but if that were really true, then Russians and Swedes would be good at it (fighting)."

Writer James Deacon, Maclean's

The August 1999 Open Ice Summit gave 11 recommendations for hockey - one of which was changing the game to practice ratio. While many of our survey respondents did not see the correlation between game/practice ratio and the reduction of violence (only 4 per cent of respondents considered this as a factor which contributes strongly to the level of violent behaviour), the topic - and more specifically, the need to return to the fundamentals of hockey - was brought up at the forums and in written submissions.

Though many saw the value of increasing the focus on skill development, reducing the number of games is still a tough sell for coaches, parents and players. Many parents do not feel they would get their money's worth when the kids aren't playing games.

A Victoria parent said his association can't afford the ice time. "We have one practice, one game," he said. "We have limited ice time. Adult recreation players can afford to pay more for ice time so they get the choice times. Ice rinks are there to make money."

"We get pressure from parents on coaches to play more games because parents don't want to watch practices," said a Quesnel forum participant. "How do we get parents to see the value of practices?"

Coaches complained that they don't have the tools to develop good, fun practices and suggested that the BCAHA and CHA provide templates.

"It's too easy to play games," said a coach at the Quesnel forum. "To put together a good practice takes time to prepare. Coaches don't have the time to put this effort into it."

Much has been said about the European influence or "invasion" on North American hockey, and many forum participants were curious about the European hockey system, particularly in respect to skill development and its impact on violence. According to the European NHL players I interviewed, there is a marked difference between North American and European development systems which translates into success in professional and international competition. In 1998, European players made up only 22.5 per cent of the NHL team rosters, yet accounted for 50 per cent of the scoring.

Former Canuck Alexander Mogilny, now playing for the New Jersey Devils, told me that during his player development in Russia, he spent a lot of time developing skills on the ice.

"We had a lot of practices, we didn't have many games," he said. "Even back then we didn't play a game until Christmas. We played once in two weeks maybe. We looked forward to the games back then."

Sweden's Mattias Ohlund, a Canucks defenseman, told me that as a kid he had to play all positions, defensively and offensively.

"Especially in the bigger rink you need to have a lot of skill and be a good skater," he said. "We'd play one - at the most two games a week until I was at least 14 or 15 and we'd have a lot of practices. It was difficult coming here - a lot of games, but less practices."

Although the Canadian Hockey Association recommends at least 3 practices to one game, many teams play twice as many games as practices. In Europe, players don't play in scheduled competitions until they are at least seven. The European schedule for youth hockey is 30 games and at least three times as many practices. The Canadian

youth hockey season (bantam) is roughly 30 to 40 games (not including tournaments and playoffs) and practice time is at a premium. One player at the B.C. Winter Games in February told me that his team hasn't had a practice since October.

Games provide little opportunity for coaches to instruct. *In Systematic Observation of Youth Ice Hockey Coaches During Games*, authors Trudel and Cote said through their observation of 14 youth ice hockey coaches during 32 different games a relatively low percentage of time was spend providing information and feedback. The study indicated that coaches did not take advantage of "teachable" moments during games. The observation results indicates that 51.2 per cent of time spent by coaches was observing the game without interacting with players; 15 per cent was in organizing activities (e.g. line changes); 8.1 per cent in directing the game, 6.7 per cent in encouraging players and only 6.1 per cent in providing information to players. Coaches observed directed most of their behaviour towards players in action (40.9 per cent), 30.4 per cent towards players on the bench and 22.3 per cent towards players in transition.

Former NHL referee Bruce Hood in *For the Good of the Game* says in youth hockey games he sees players spend 10 per cent of their time worried about what to do with the puck, and most of the rest of the time "slowing down, hacking, intimidating other players." He says players play an average of seven two-minute shifts in games which does not provide enough time to develop their skills.

"Coaches are often ridiculed if they don't win, or if they try to make their practices fun," said Hood, "Coaches can merge fun with skill development - dumping out a pail of pucks for the kids to try new skills and then finishing up the practice with a scrimmage."

"European coaches believe that practices are more important than games," he said. "In Canadian hockey, we are seeing players using heart and desire over skills. If they beat European teams, it's not because they are more skilled than their European counterparts, it's because they are responding to the pressure to win."

There appears to be a need, and a desire to get back to the basics. Many of the young players I interviewed said that while practices aren't as fun as games, a lot of the hits from behind, illegal stickwork and such were not necessarily deliberate acts of violence, but mistakes.

A Prince George forum participant - a sports psychologist - said coaches are too lazy to teach skills. He's looked at other countries' sport development systems and saw that there's much more of an emphasis on skill development.

"The Czechs have a very small hockey population," he said, "yet they send a lot of players to the NHL. Our coaching theory program has to have more emphasis on skill development especially when they are young."

Author Edmund Vaz spent the winter of 1969-70 gathering and recording observational, conversational and interview data to see how the game is played. Through his observations (recounted in *The Professionalism of Young Hockey Players*) he found "shooting skills have generally been reduced to offensive rushes and defensive slap shots, rather than systematic strategy or stickhandling, and 'clutch and grab' 'dump the puck in' brand of hockey remains an important model for young players today. In addition, the number of brawls and extremely violent incidents have generated a growing concern about the prevalence of violence."

European players told me that a greater focus on skill development contributes to different attitudes to fighting and violence. "It's not the number one priority back there," said Moligny. "You really didn't do it back there unless you really pissed somebody off."

"You see fights," said Ohlund, "but you don't see players throwing their gloves away. If you do back home you're going to get suspended for a lot of games. We've never had it (fighting) back home so it's nothing they miss. Over here, it's a big part of the game."

Above all, every one involved in hockey and other sports has to remember that for the majority of young players, the game is meant to be fun. When sports are no longer fun, many kids leave.

The final word goes to Boston Bruin legend Bobby Orr who told me that young people will face pressure in the upper echelons of hockey and in the business world soon enough, so minor hockey has to retain its focus on fun and enjoyment.

"The key is fun," he said. "If the child is having fun, he or she is going to keep playing. If he or she is having fun, they are going to listen. If they are listening, then we can teach them."

The Body Checking Issue - and other injury concerns

"Body checking is a novelty," said a Kamloops parent. "It's a skill. So when it's introduced, the kids go crazy."

Perhaps the most consistent message at all levels of this project was that body checking – or the lack thereof – is an issue for minor hockey. Unprompted, almost every player and participants at the forums gave their views on body checking. For the most part, the players insisted that allowing body checking earlier would alleviate violence as players would be able to give or take a hit and would be more likely to contain their aggression to legitimate hitting.

Parents and players alike see body checking as a skill and one which should be taught through body checking clinics or sessions. Many players described the frustration of going to tournaments in other provinces (body checking is allowed in all age groups in Alberta and Saskatchewan, for example) and being "blasted" by other players who knew how to check. Furthermore, some players had developed body checking skills at clinics in other provinces and found these techniques to be useful once body checking is allowed (at bantam levels in B.C.)

"Everyone's just waiting to get to bantam so that they can start hitting," said a Nanaimo player.

"In Alberta, atom and pee wee is full contact," said another Nanaimo player. "We go to play them and some guys are used to hitting, but not most of us. We get beat up in the corners."

"Body checking is a novelty," said a Kamloops parent. "It's a skill. So when it's introduced, the kids go crazy."

"In Saskatchewan, before kids get into body work they have checking camps," said a Prince George parent. "Each team goes to a camp and teaches kids how to keep the stick down, how to check and hit properly. When you know the legal way to play then you won't resort to the violence."

Our survey results indicated that 72 per cent of respondents wanted body checking introduced earlier than its current bantam level. When asked if they believe banning body checking play in the peewee leagues encourages or discourages violence at later stages of hockey, 47 per cent said that banning body checking encourages violence at later stages, 34 per cent said it discourages while 19 per cent said it has no effect, or weren't sure of the effect.

This message was echoed at every player interview session and forum. There are, however, dissenting voices.

A few players at the interview sessions said they didn't like the body checking, and others said they knew of kids leaving the sport because of body contact. A few parents at the forums said they didn't feel body checking was a necessary component of youth hockey – it prevents players from learning skating, stickhandling and passing skills, or kids would simply get hurt or be afraid of getting hit. In a written submission, a Vancouver parent advocated "all-star rules" hockey as an alternative hockey league for young players. At the Richmond forum the discussion turned to the recent Canadian and women's world hockey championship success and their entertaining play.

"When women play - they are very skilled players, and there's no deliberate contact," said one forum participant. "Take a look at these women, why can't the guys do the same thing?"

The strongest voice against body contact at the initiating stage comes from the medical profession. Various medical studies suggest that the majority of hockey injuries results from body checking – a survey of Eastern Collegiate Athletic Conference and the Hockey East Conference found that 65 per cent of hockey injuries were caused by checking[5]; a study of high school hockey players showed body checking accounted for 38 per cent of injuries with illegal play being responsible for another 26%[6]; in another study, body checking accounted for 59% of all injuries (20% resulting from legal checking and 39% from illegal checking) with another 27% resulting from rule violations.

In *Hitting in Amateur Ice Hockey: Not Worth the Risk*, an article for the Physician and Sports Medicine journal (Nov. 99), Dr. William O. Roberts described his study of youth ice hockey injury during the 1989-90 season in Minnesota. He and his colleagues tracked 152 boys in three age levels and various skill levels. The injury rate was 15 per 100 players per season (52 total injuries, including 8 fractures). Thirty-eight players were injured during games (and 86 per cent of the injuries) as a result of body contact; nine involved legal checking while the remainder resulted from illegal checks or other violations.

B.C.'s Dr. Robert Henderson, a long-time member of the Canadian Academy of Sport Medicine's Hockey Safety Committee and former pee wee hockey coach, says that the statement "kids don't know how to give or take a hit" is a myth. "Injuries occur not

through the lack of knowledge of how to 'take a check' but through unsafe checking such as checking from behind and interference and checking of players who do not have the puck at the time," he said.

Game equipment in relation to violence was brought up by a few players following the March 11 game where the Toronto Maple Leaf's Bryan Berard almost lost his eye after being hit with a stick. A few players I interviewed spoke of the advancement in hockey equipment and mandatory equipment requirements, specifically helmets, and how these may contribute to violence. Players may, they said, be more inclined to hit another player with a stick when there is equipment – such as helmets and face shields – protecting the victim. The players weren't advocating removing such protective equipment, but offering an explanation to why stickwork above the waist is increasing.

Similar themes[7] were reported by sports media following Berard's incident and subsequent calls for mandatory face shields in the NHL. By no means should helmets, face shields and other safety equipment requirements be lifted – such protective gear have substantially reduced and prevented injuries – but suggestions that equipment encourage violent tactics tell me that more should be done to reinforce the concept that protective gear is not "battle armour" nor does it give players license to use hockey sticks as weapons.

B.C.'s Dr. Doug Clement, a former doctor for the Vancouver Canucks, says what happens in the professional leagues should be of concern to those involved in minor hockey, particularly in respect to player safety. He calls for more vigorous enforcement of rules with greater disciplinary measures to deal with violence.

"The NHL's pattern of play and acceptance of violence is the example that all younger players follow," he said.

Clement says that violence and illegal tactics in hockey lead to head injuries, concussions and eye injuries. Players responding to our surveys corroborated this safety impact: 44 per cent of respondents said that they had been injured from rough play (e.g. fighting, high sticking, checking from behind), sustaining injuries ranging from concussions and neck injuries, to slashed wrists and ankles. Sixteen per cent of respondents also said that they have wanted to stop playing hockey, or get off the ice because the game got too rough (17 per cent of respondents also said their parents have urged them to leave hockey because of rough play).

Concerned about the injury rate of children in hockey, the Canadian Academy of Sport Medicine (CASM) in 1988 recommended in a position paper that intentional body checking be "eliminated from levels of minor hockey which are not designed as training for professional and international ranks." The Academy also advocates the complete elimination of fighting from hockey, increased enforcement of existing rules prohibiting unsafe acts, and major educational programs aimed at coaches, trainers, players and parents to "deinstitutionalize the current norms of violence and injury."

The position paper, being reviewed by the CASM this month, says:

- the variability in size and maturity of pre-bantam aged players, together with the peak growth spurt and increased risk of injury for pee wee-aged players presents a strong argument for banning body checking for players under the age of 14.
- bantam hockey (age 14-15) is a more appropriate age to begin teaching the techniques, but in a graduated fashion (no contact near boards, hip check and blocking only)
- full body checking can begin at the midget level (age 16-17) once there is less discrepancy in player size and maturity.

SportSmart Canada, in an article published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal[8] reported that in Canada, 243 spinal injuries were reported in hockey for the period 1966-96.

> "A push or check from behind accounted for 74 (40%) of the 184 cases of injury for which there was adequate documentation to determine the mechanism of injury. An impact with the boards accounted for 157 (77%) of the 204 cases of injury for which there was adequate documentation of the object impacted. Impact between players (32/204 or 16%) was also a frequent mechanism of injury, whereas impacts with the ice or a goal post were less frequent.
>
> Organized games accounted for 166 injuries, whereas 10 occurred during practice and 4 occurred during shinny games; for the remainder the circumstances were unknown. In our case series, the median age was 17 (range 11 to 47) years, and only 6 of the injured players were females. Ontario accounted for 126 (52%) of the injuries, whereas only 22 (9%) came from Quebec, a value comparable to those of individual western provinces. In our view, it is unlikely that this regional variation is attributable to differences in reporting between provinces ... We found that about 50% of spinal cord injuries occurred in the 16–20 year age group and that most occurred in games at the competitive level (data not shown).

In response to this report, Dr. Barry Pless, professor of pediatrics at McGill University of Montreal, said these numbers are "shocking" and that checking from behind and checking into the boards should be banned from non-professional level hockey.[9] He points to the difference in injury rates between Ontario and Quebec and data which indicates that Quebec's injury rate is 73 per 1,000 players compared to Ontario's 135 per 1,000. "It seems reasonable to assume that in part this may be due to the fact that at the peewee level body-checking is permitted in Ontario but not in Quebec," he said.

Because there is so much polarization between the B.C. hockey community's and the medical community's concerns about body checking – the issue of banning or reintroducing body checking at earlier ages is not easily resolved. The Canadian Hockey Association and the Ontario Hockey Federation, however, is currently undergoing a three-year study on this issue, comparing injury rates between players who are not allowed to body check, with those who are, those who are given training on body checking with those who aren't and other body checking related issues. This study is only in its first year, so it's difficult to extract a definitive recommendation at this time.

A quick review of injuries reported to the Canadian Hockey Association by provincial associations indicate that on average, 100 injuries a year in B.C. amateur hockey can be attributed to "violent" or "illegal" (e.g. checking from behind, hit by stick) tactics[10]. Because of different association rules (e.g. checking vs. non-checking pre-bantam leagues) and because conditions have not been controlled, it is difficult to compare B.C.'s injury rate with other provinces. The CHA / OHF study, however, will give us a better comparison of checking vs non-checking impacts than simply a comparison of injury rates.

Dr. Henderson also brings up an interesting sidebar related to the medical standpoint, and this is in respect to violence and the use of anabolic steroids. He feels the biggest problem in hockey is that junior hockey is not subject to doping control.

"It continues to amaze me that junior football is part of the doping control program in Canada, but junior hockey is not," he said. "I have no doubt that use of anabolic steroids is widespread in that group of athletes – being used to add strength and create the aggressiveness that has proven itself necessary to make it into the NHL."

While Dr. Henderson's remarks are directed towards junior, rather than minor hockey, it does raise important considerations in relationship to aggressiveness and violence and illegal substances.

The (Legal) Case Against Violence

The relatively mild punishments meted out to athletes in some sports ensure that current levels of interpersonal aggression are likely to continue unabated. In contrast, the greater certainty and severity of sanctions against violence in the public domain have generally proven effective in deterring aggressive outbursts, at least among North American audiences.

Professor Gordon Russell, The Social Psychology of Sport

Following the McSorley incident, the public debate centered not on the legitimacy of his actions (his actions were perhaps unanimously considered irrational and out of line), but how he should be dealt with and by whom. Not only was McSorley suspended indefinitely by the league (the rest of the season with a review before the next season begins), but he was charged with assault by the Vancouver police. The summary charge carries a maximum sentence of 18 months. The last NHL player charged with a criminal offence that occurred on the ice was Minnesota North Stars' Dino Ciccarelli in 1988 after he struck the Toronto Maple Leafs' Luke Richardson over the head with a stick. Ciccarelli was fined $1,000 and spent a day in jail. Rarely has sports violence been brought to the courts, but in recent years there is a growing trend to have sport skirmishes played out in the legal and more commonly, civil courts.

Since 1969 when Boston's Ted Green and St. Louis's Wayne Maki were found not guilty of aggravated assault following a stick-swinging incident, 13 NHL or WHL players have faced charges for hockey incidents.[11] Other hockey incidents have been sent to civil court including a few in British Columbia - Unruh v. Webber, 1992 where Steve Webber hit Mel Unruh from behind and into the boards in a midget game, breaking Uhruh's neck and leaving him a quadriplegic. Unruh received $3.7 million in damages but the judge said Webber did not mean to hurt him and the check was not vicious. In 1995, the B.C. Court of Appeal awarded $4 million to William Zapf who was left a quadriplegic at 18 after being driven into the boards head-first by William Muckalt (now a New York Islander) during a Junior A game.[12] Laura Robinson's book *Crossing the Line* also outlines a number of criminal and civil cases involving athletes' behaviour on and off the ice.

The threat of criminal and civil litigation has to be a growing concern for sport organizations, particularly in the amateur leagues that are already short in resources. But as result polls suggest, there is mounting acceptance for the courts to get involved in violent sport incidents. A March 2000 *BCTV Question of the Day* asked "Do you think Bruins defenceman Marty McSorley should be facing a criminal charge for the Donald Brashear slashing?" Of 803 responses, 81 per cent said yes, 15 per cent said no, the NHL is doing enough and 3 per cent said no, but he should be suspended for life. An April 2000 Angus Reid poll said 68 per cent of Canadians feel that the

Vancouver police were right to charge McSorley compared to 29 per cent who said they were wrong and three per cent who said "don't know."

In *Violence in Sport*, Michael Smith references the *Sports Violence Arbitration Act of 1983* in the United States which would force major professional sport leagues to establish an arbitration board with the power to discipline players for using "excessive violent conduct" and to make their teams financially liable for injuries suffered by the victims. The B.C. Medical Association has gone as far as developing a resolution (to be voted on at its annual general meeting this year) calling for "violent acts outside the rules of the sport by its participants be treated by the law as if the violence occurred outside of sport."

There is, however, the issue of informed consent. Most sports, if not all sports, carry some risk of harm - particularly where body contact is involved. Players know this going into the game. But if playing a sport implies presumed consent, do players know what they are consenting to? If there is an implied or acceptable notion that a level of violence is "part of the game" (62 per cent of those we surveyed said elements of this is true) then there's a fine line between consent and what constitutes illicit or criminal acts. Nonetheless, I doubt that a 12-year-old gives consent to being hit over the head with a stick, or other incidents described by some of the players I interviewed. In fact, during player interviews and forum discussions there was a consensus that what goes on in the hockey rink is often judged by different standards than if similar actions occurred on the streets.

"We have to look at the rules, are they good, are they being applied?" said a Prince George parent. "If the acts on the ice happened on the streets, they would be criminal acts. Are we encouraging acts that are criminal? In Europe, the rules on the road are the same as on the ice."

"Everyone blames the referee or the coach. We have to make the kids take more responsibility for what they do," said a Victoria parent. "If you are on the street you could charge them, but on the ice you can get away with it."

McSorley's case goes before the B.C. courts in the months ahead. Ultimately, professional hockey may be on trial along with McSorley as this case - particularly with the public outcry and media attention given to it - may be seen as a test case for further violent acts in sports. For the most part, professional players and leagues believe that these actions are best handled on the field of play and resolved through their own league sanctions. Prosecutors and police may feel that their time is better

spent on prosecuting and pursuing "real" criminals. But as the injury and societal stakes escalate with sport violence, there is undoubtedly a growing movement to deal with such incidents in the courts. As Michael Smith in his paper "*What is sports violence - a sociolegal perspective*" says, the "extent to which a behaviour is perceived as violence has a great deal to do with what people are willing to do about it."

The Rules of the Game - on and off the ice

"A rule is not a rule unless there's a consequence." Nanaimo parent

As hockey evolves, so too do its rules. Rule changes often define the character of the game and reflect emerging safety concerns as the game itself becomes faster, the players bigger and as aggression levels - or at least the public acceptance of aggression - change. An University of Western Ontario paper *"Stewards of Ice Hockey": A Historical Review of Safety Rules in Canadian Amateur Ice Hockey*"[33] describes the evolution of hockey rules from pre-1919 hockey through to 1996. In summary, in the formative years (prior to 1919) the focus was on establishing how to play an organized game of hockey. During 1919-45, the rule makers sanctioned controlled body contact, prohibited contact within five feet of the boards - only to allow it in the latter years - and penalized fighting aggressively with increasing severity for repeated offences. The last 50 years has been, according to the authors, a half-century of much change.

> "The most recent 50 years (1946-96) can be characterized as a period in which the rules of the game became more complex, the role of referee's discretion increased, and the fortification of the boards surrounding the rink increased, which, with the increased speed and size of players, dictated more safety concerns about play near the boards, controlling the fighting (particularly the brawling), and use of the stick or other implements to inflict harm." (p. 35)

The authors argue that perhaps a return to earlier times - "relinquishing the advantage/ disadvantage mindset, simplified the rules, and drastically reduced the discretion of the referee" - would best serve safety interests.

I don't know if the game's rules warrant simplifying or changing - these are decisions best left to the governing bodies - their committees who review rule implementation each year. I do know, particularly after listening to comments throughout the forums and interviews that the biggest issue is not specific rules or regulations on the ice, but their interpretation, consistency of application and the discretionary powers of officials.

Many parents, players and coaches told me that their greatest "beef" about the rules is that officials do not call infractions consistently, the referees either miss too many calls, or make too many calls - all which contribute to the referee's action, or inaction, controlling the game too much.

"I just got suspended for (verbally) abusing a referee. We (coaches) see it from another side," said a Victoria coach. "When we see a 12-year-old ref who's not making calls, being one-sided, some of my kids retaliate. Where do I go to complain about a referee? It got ugly, one of my quietest kids was trying to chase another player, the game got out of control."

Many forum participants related their concerns that when games get out of control, coaches who wished to stop games could be sanctioned through Canadian amateur hockey rules. Forum participants, expressing their frustration with rules and regulations overriding their children's safety, cited incidents in their regions where coaches were suspended for stopping games or didn't stop games which they felt got out of hand.

"You're telling me that a kid can be beat up on the ice and you can't take him off the ice," said a Castlegar parent. "He's being stabbed, speared and afraid to go near the puck and we can't stop the game. I can pull my kid out of school if he is being beat up, but I can't pull him off the ice? That's crazy."

An issue which came up a few times was the need for more consistency and communication in terms of how suspensions are given out and how complaints are handled. A few parents expressed frustration at too much "politics" and "personalities" coming into suspensions. This I would imagine is not uncommon for any sport organization. Nonetheless, it might be worthwhile to ensure that dispute resolution processes are clear, consistent and accessible, particularly when dealing with the inevitable turnover of volunteers, league executives, coaches, officials and parents. One letter-writer also suggested that "victims" of suspended players receive written notification of steps taken so that they receive some assurance that the incident was dealt with adequately. On a positive note, one forum participant acknowledged that the Speak Out program is giving hockey an avenue and the tools to address unacceptable behaviour.

One final comment on the rules of the game is that through rule changes and refinement, the game has evolved to ensure fairness and safety. All those involved in the game, particularly players, need to respect the rules and their intent and to understand the consequences of violating these rules. Edmund W. Vaz in the *Professionalism of Young Hockey Players* says players should be held responsible for playing within the rules.

"Contrary to what many believe, it is not imperative that coaches be responsible for the conduct of their players," he writes. "Players need to be taught at an early age to be responsible for their actions on the ice. Players ought to be taught and to want to obey the normative rules of the game. The task is to modify the game so that the values of success and of conformity to the rules of the game are both rewarded. And whenever rule violation is committed, both the offender and the team must be sanctioned."

Futhermore, Vaz says it appears "that both coaches and players are quite casual in their attitude towards rule obedience. At no time is a player given formal instruction to obey rules. By observing the circumstances where rule disobedience is accepted or rewarded - through watching NHL players, or through his/her coach's reaction or inaction to rule violation - a player recognizes that breaking the rules can be considered skills to be used judiciously under specific conditions."

A Fair Play Success Story - Dartmouth Whalers Hockey Association

When societal attitudes and influences, media promotion and the so-called hockey subculture all point to a bleak future for kids in hockey, it's encouraging to see a program on the other side of the country achieve huge success.

In 1994, the Dartmouth Whalers Minor Hockey Association introduced a fair-play program to reduce verbal and physical abuse in the game. Five years later, the Halifax-area association is boasting more championships and fewer suspensions.

Since the fair play program was introduced, Dartmouth teams have won four provincial championships - the same number won in the ten years before the policy was implemented. Suspensions dropped to 38 in 1998 from 78 the season before as players who began in the association under the fair-play rule reached the bantam level.

The program - which similar programs such as Calgary's Turning Point program have since been modelled after - includes player, parent and coach contracts, a "Rink

Behaviour Policy" with posters warning arena spectators that they will be ejected for verbal or physical abuse, formalized coach selection processes, fair play team awards, junior officiating programs and a fair play support team.

Bill Schipilow, president of the Whalers' organization, in an email interview, said 80 per cent strongly agreed with the program according to their first-season post-test questionnaire of Novice and Atom parents and players. This level of acceptance, he says, is bound to grow as people become less tolerant of inappropriate behaviour.

Schipilow says the impetus of the program was to alleviate as much as possible the concept of winning at all costs at the expense of safety and respect. He indicated the two main reasons why kids leave hockey or any sport are safety and the lack of fun.

"Minor hockey is recreation, not a NHL farm system," he said. "The players want to play because they love the game, not to entertain the parents in the stands. Too many parents looked upon minor hockey as a 'career' move for their sons or daughters. There was too much pressure by coaches and parents being placed on young players who only wanted to play a game they liked to play for fun."

Schipilow says giving players fair ice time was another motivation. "When the players are being paid to play hockey, rather than the parents having to pay for their kids to play hockey, then the coaches can sit the players out," he said.

He says the entrenchment of fair play in hockey takes more than papering the system with brochures and posters. "Governing bodies still have a tendency to paste posters in a rink," he said. "Posters alone will not address the issues. We all know what the problems in hockey are. The problems reside in a growing lack of respect and safety in the game. To make the game more positive for all participants we have to change an attitude. This cannot occur overnight and above all, it can will not occur by posting posters in rinks."

The key to a successful fair play program he says is dealing with the interactions during the game.

"Fair play impacts on the event and participants right in the rink itself," he said. "Fair Play does this with a series of ongoing interventions. Posters are only one intervention. Handing out pamphlets is only one intervention. Educating people is only one intervention. Fair Play has all of these - this is what makes our program unique and successful."

Interventions must also be followed up. "That is, get rid of coaches who don't play all their players, get rid of coaches who put too much emphasis on winning at all costs and put undue stress on players to win, make those abusive parents accountable for their actions in the stands against opposing players, coaches and officials," he said.

Follow-up is possible through a committed executive and a Fair Play Support Group - a group of volunteers that address issues such as unfair ice time for players and inappropriate behaviour by coaches, spectators, players and officials.

Schipilow admits that there will always be the "old guard" that don't embrace fair play. There is a small but vocal group of people, he said, who have an over-inflated desire to win and feel that fair play principles and equal ice time impacts their winning records. But he believes that fair play does not compromise competitive principles.

"Fair Play encourages every player and team to win as many games as possible and to be competitive as possible, but within the rules of the game," he said.

By encouraging respect for the rules of the game, the officials and their decisions and all participants, Fair Play, says Schipilow is a very 'common sense' program.

In an April 1999 Globe and Mail article (*A Big Hit*) Tom Krzyski, executive director of Nova Scotia Hockey Association said the success of the Dartmouth program has other organizations in the province looking at similar strategies.

"It (the Dartmouth program) has been a real eye opener for the other 39 minor hockey associations in the program," he said. "Initially there was criticism that this fair-play program would dilute the quality of play and take the edge off the players' wanting to win. But that isn't what happened.

"Instead, the number of injuries during Whalers' games, at all levels, dropped and the players and parents seemed to enjoy the game more."

With the success the Dartmouth Whalers Minor Hockey Association has had in posting wins and reducing suspensions, I think its record and common sense approach truly speaks for itself.

The final word from the players

In the player interview sessions held before the public forums, the hockey concerns were basically illegal stick work, hitting from behind, lack of respect, inconsistent officiating and the behaviour of some parents. All this translates into some form of intimidation and humiliation. Almost to a player, they suggested there should be more respect to each other, to officials, coaches and parents and they expected the same in return.

While hockey violence was the main focus of our forums, players were quick to point out that violent acts in other sports were also disturbing. Basketball players told me about taking flagrant elbows to the face during games, punches to the back, even eye gouging. One player told me he witnessed another played head butting a referee. Slew footing, kicking the back of legs were other acts of violence mentioned by soccer players.

I hosted a series of interviews with players, male and female, many in groups of 3 or 4 and also met with entire teams. I don't think for a minute that the majority of players aren't having fun. Most said that's why they were involved in sports, they were having fun and developing new friendships.

Recommendations

Eliminating violence from hockey - or any sport - is not going to be accomplished by a "quick fix." The hockey subculture which encourages violence as "part of the game" and players' personal social learning curve took years to develop and is regularly reinforced. Emphasizing skill development, safety and fun over cheap shots, fisticuffs and trash talk takes commitment from every one involved in hockey - parents, players, coaches, officials, league executives, sponsors, government, spectators - at all levels of hockey. The following recommendations (that can also be adapted to all sports) are derived from this project's public forums, interviews, research and consultation which I believe will bring us closer to what we consider the best game around, remains so.

1. Parent Contract

Similar to the Coach's Code of Conduct (developed by the Coaches Association of BC), a parent contract should be developed and signed by each parent at the beginning of the season. If this contract is broken, the referee, local association and/or the coach has the right to suspend the parent for a number of games as decided by the local association. The SportSafe Coach's Game Plan publication has a Fair Play code for parents (as well as for athletes and coaches), developed by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, which could be easily adapted.

2. Fair Play committee

Fair Play is not a new concept - there is already a national Fair Play program (developed in 1990 by Fair Play Canada and now administered by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport), but there is a need for local associations to embrace and re-commit to its principles. Teams or local associations should establish a fair play committee, a group of volunteers that address issues such as unfair ice time for players and inappropriate behaviour by coaches, spectators, players and officials. This league committee could oversee how issues will be resolved, establish and communicate clear conducts of behaviour and monitor spectator behaviour. The committee would be supported at games by a parent(s) who would act as a quasi-game commissioner who oversees conduct in the stands and behind the bench, handles or reports on disputes that occur outside of the referee's responsibilities. (There are league commissioners in amateur hockey as well as District or Divisional Directors to deal with match penalties and gross misconduct penalties - this Fair Play committee and parent commissioner could be parallel, or an extension of this structure to deal with situations before they get to the league or district level).

3. Corporate support for Fair Play team

If they don't already, the local associations (or the BCAHA at a provincial level) could solicit corporate sponsorship of a local or provincial Fair Play team. This sponsorship can be in the form of "Pizza Nights", products or give-aways that reward players and/or teams for fair play.

4. Expansion of PCAHA Sportsmanship Point System

In 1998, the Pacific Coast Amateur Hockey Association established a pilot project awarding sportsmanship points to C level teams if they complete their game with fewer than their quota of penalty minutes. The PCAHA should review this system and consider expansion to other levels of hockey within their association, and the BCAHA should consider expansion or pilot testing in other regions. This sportsmanship point system can also determine Fair Play team with rewards as outlined in recommendation #3 or league rewards such as assured play-off spot, skate with the Canucks session, etc.

5. Parents / Coaches / Players Meetings

If not already done, teams should be encouraged to hold an initial meeting to discuss expectations, coaching philosophy, acceptable behaviour, code of conducts (and sign parent contract and athlete / coach fair play codes) and other issues. Follow-up meetings could also be scheduled in the middle of and the end of the season.

6. Two-referee (or variation) system

Amateur hockey should follow the example of the NHL and move towards a two-referee system, or give more responsibility to one of the linesmen to call infractions occurring away from the play. The BCAHA or the CHA should solicit support from the NHL to help develop more referees to expand the referee roster at the amateur level and act as a feeder to the professional ranks - particularly as the requirement for NHL referees has doubled with the new two-referee system.

7. Coaches Education

The resources and expertise of the National Coaching Institute, the Sport and Community Development Branch and the CHA / BCAHA coaching programs should be solicited to develop or expand the National Coaching Certification Program to develop educational tools to help coaches better understand their role in preventing violence, addressing "social" issues and manage player behaviour. Coaches need not have a doctorate in sport psychology or sociology, but a basic understanding of what causes aggression and how it can be better managed.

The CHA should develop hockey-specific templates for practices (the National Coaching Institute could also develop generic templates) to help coaches design better, fun and interesting practices. Practices need not all be on the ice - they can be "dry land" practices that don't require ice time and are easier to cheaper and easier to schedule. Coaches shouldn't be afraid to give the game to the kids - try modifications which are more attuned to their attention levels, values, size and abilities. (See also Recommendation 11).

The 1999 Open Ice Summit included a recommendation for a master coaching program. Such a program should be implemented throughout all certification levels, particularly for community coaches, and in all regions.

8. Officials Education

Clinics and testing of officials should put more emphasis on the educational function of officials to players and encourage more (positive) communication between officials and players / officials and coaches. An official mentorship and evaluation program should be established to provide more support and consistency for developing referees and linesmen.

A common "philosophy" of officiating needs to be established so that officials, particularly young ones, understand the distinction between controlling the game and "over-officiating." Officials should be taught and encouraged to use preventative officiating techniques - that is, warning players to get their sticks down, informing coaches when players need to cool off or when they are repeating infractions, etc.

The *Shared Respect* initiative developed from one of the recommendations of the 1999 Open Ice Summit could be expanded to include enhanced development tools for officials. Respect - for officials, coaches and players - is earned with competent and consistent conduct.

9. Governance Model & Dispute Resolution

Frustration often results when due process is ill-served. When we're dealing with our children's development within a playing season we need timely and just resolutions of issues, before "politics" and "personalities" get the better of us. Young players told me they just want to play and to ensure that "what's fair is fair." League administrators can go a long way to help players with these objectives with better communication of how the system works and how to access it; better tracking and communication of suspensions and game misconducts to ensure more consistency and adherence to set standards and reviews of their policies and procedures to ensure that safety, fairness and enjoyment step in before the "politics" and "personalities."

Almost every forum brought up the issue of coaches being suspended for stopping games. The BCAHA and/or CHA should revisit this Canadian association rule and / or direct responsibility for the stoppage of games to a Fair Play committee or parent group.

10. National Hockey League Leadership / Media Responsibility

Many forum participants acknowledged that real change in violence prevention will come from the bottom up and expressed their commitment to ensure that happens. But at the same time, they requested leadership or support from the "top down", that is, the National Hockey League and the National Hockey League Players Association. The professional league and its players should take a larger role in providing resources, mentorship opportunities (for coaches and officials) and more positive examples for kids.

The media also has to recognize and embrace its role in promoting positive role models both at the professional level and in their communities. Media has a huge role in how hockey is perceived and as such should also de-emphasize the violent aspects of professional hockey and focus more on the game's finesse. Sure, McSorley's attack on Brashear holds news value, but the day-to-day broadcasting and reporting of hockey games needs objectivity and balance.

11. Game to Practice Ratio

As per the 1999 Open Ice Summit recommendation, parents, players, coaches and associations should support movement to a less taxing game schedule and more skill development through increased practices. Many kids are thrown into a game situation without appropriate skills - without these skills, players resort to chippiness, dump the puck playing strategies and often, illegal tactics. Coaches also need the support and the resources (educational tools) to establish fun and educational practices.

12. Body Checking issue

As described earlier, the polarization between the concept of body checking as a prevention to violence and injuries versus body checking as a precursor to violence and injuries is not easily resolved. Once the Canadian Hockey Association and Ontario Hockey Federation has completed its three-year study on this issue, the CHA / BCAHA should base their decision (whether to ban body checking or not) upon safety of young players, communicate the study's findings and safety rationale to local associations and work with provincial medical association and/or sport medicine and science professionals to ensure that whatever decision is made is supported by

enhanced coaching resources to ensure player safety. With information from this study, parents can make informed decisions on whether to place their children in contact or non-contact hockey leagues.

With a revised game to practice ratio and body checking coaching tools, coaches can spend more time teaching players body checking skills in practices prior to players moving to the level where body checking is allowed.

13. Facility Zero Tolerance for Violence Policy

Similar to the City of Hamilton's example, municipal recreation commissions and facility owners should be encouraged to develop a facility zero tolerance for violence policy. This policy would give facility staff the right to eject, and if necessary ban unruly spectators or facility users. While this policy would not be able to influence conduct on the ice, or on the playing field, it helps to establish a culture where violence and anti-social behaviour is not acceptable.

14. Better Communication and Distribution of Resources

There are a number of excellent programs and resources provided by the BC Amateur Hockey Association, Canadian Hockey Association, B.C. Centre of Excellence, Coaches Association of B.C., Coaching Association of Canada, Sport BC, Fair Play Canada, the Sport and Community Development Branch and other agencies to help coaches, officials, players, parents and league administrators provide more skill development opportunities and a safer environment for kids in sports - many of which are available on the Internet.

Some people take full advantage of these programs and resources while others, as I found during the forum discussions, are not aware that they exist. For example, some forum participants said there should be a school credit program available to help recruit and retain officials - the Ministry of Education, through its External Sports Course Credit program provides credit towards graduation for eligible hockey players, coaches and officials; some parents asked about re-introducing the *Nike Initiation Program*, a CHA program that still exists; coaches asked for skill development tools which are available through the CHA's *Play Right* program.

In any sport, local associations - particularly those in the regions - need to know and to communicate to their members (parents, players, coaches and officials) what's available and how these programs and resources can be accessed.

Specific Recommendations to Key "Players" in Hockey

The recommendations outlined above are fundamentally systemic changes and enhancements. Preventing violence and anti-social behaviour is a goal which ultimately needs commitment from everyone involved in sport - players, parents, facility owners, coaches, officials, administrators, media, volunteers and sponsors. Every one needs to recognize their role in promoting safety and fair play and to take responsibility for their own actions. What follows are specific recommendations or "attitude shifts" for those involved in hockey which will help them support fair play principles and safety for young players.

Everyone should:

- encourage positive behaviour...focus more on skill development...less on violence
- increase the lines of communication - players should have the opportunity to talk face to face with coaches, minor sports governing bodies, referees to air their concerns.
- improve calibre of play without compromising the level of competition
- take pride in boasting of most games played without injuries on-ice
- have a suggestion box in arena..how can we improve the game?
- regularly remind and encourage players to keep their sticks down - hockey helmets and face shields do not give them license to hit other players in the head.
- support and encourage rule obedience and a consistent approach to using game and league rules to stop violent acts in sport. This may involve ejection and instant suspensions for those involved in violent behaviour and total bans on fighting in minor hockey and hitting from behind.
- use preventative actions as our best safety tools. A minor hockey association representative or official should inspect players equipment before they're allowed to play a game and players should be told to tighten chin straps, secure helmet etc., or be sent off the ice.

- support greater emphasize on skill development, more practices which focus on skating, shooting, passing and how to check. Checking is a skill which should be taught properly.

- be cognizant of how behaviours are reinforced and rewarded and work towards rewarding acceptable behaviour and eliminating "rewards" (fan and coach approval and attention, acceptance of win-at-all-cost attitudes over rule obeyance) for unacceptable behaviour.

- control trash talking and taunting. Many players suggested they learned trash talk from their peers, professional athletes and from other kids at school. While admitting it didn't accomplish much, it was a factor in encouraging violent behaviour in sports.

Media should:

- feature the positives and benefits of youngsters playing amateur sports.

- emphasize the enjoyment level of those involved from 5 to 95, players, coaches, officials. Relate more human interest stories, e.g. family involvement in sport, youngest, oldest athlete, professional people involved (e.g. doctors, lawyers, nurses)

- make a concerted effort to show more skill, exceptional plays, superior goal-tending. Media at times glorifies violent behaviour; commercials/advertising capitalize on it - if media can't, or won't dispense with the notion of "violence sells" at the very least they should provide more balanced or objective coverage of violence in sports.

- place more emphasis in coverage of amateur sports on finesse, skill and talent and human interest as opposed to aggressive antics.

- report on and feature graduates of minor hockey/amateur sports who are making an impact in community in other capacity - civic officials, police officers, doctors etc. - to reinforce the idea that sport builds character, career skills and positive attitudes.

- highlight Canadian Hockey Association development and initiation programs and other fair play and skill development programs.

Parents should:

- not criticize the coach or referee, unless you are prepared to give up your weekends, early mornings during the week, coordinate practices, games etc.
- not live your dashed dreams of athletic greatness through your children...let them play "their" game.
- provide your enthusiasm, support, guidance in the same way you would hope to receive it.
- win or lose, don't make the ride home after the game the "worst half hour" of your kid's day. "You played great"...should be enough conversation relative to the game.
- remember that the true purpose of playing sport is having fun, anything beyond that expectation, pushes the child further away from the sport and eventually the parents.
- talk to your son/daughter...are they enjoying the sport? Are they excited about playing?
- take time to meet coach..share ideas...Is the sport the best one for your child?
- get to know other parents on team. Volunteer to assist in scorekeeping, stats, driving other players, parents.
- make an effort to congratulate/encourage referees..Do they need a ride home? Do they need drink of water between periods?

Coaches should:

- not be overly influenced by parents, go with your instincts
- remember that too much pressure on young athletes eliminates their enjoyment of the sport...let's have fun
- take advantage of available instruction and clinics in your sport in an effort to enhance your skills. A better educated coach can make practices/games more entertaining and fun.
- meet parents on a regular basis, encourage input..utilize parents' expertise.

- forget systems and technical details at early age. Focus instead on stick handling, skating, passing, shooting

- encourage families, brothers/sisters of players to assist at practices. (brother may play at higher level, sister possibly gifted power skater, figure skater, aerobics expert etc....their expertise could be beneficial and create fun atmosphere.

- not showcase frustration..if you lose control, the player will follow same pattern.

- raise awareness of importance/advantage of skill development, praise skill improvement...stress positive values.

Next steps and Final Comment

As mentioned, the comments I received at the forums, through the surveys and written submissions and through interviews were incredibly thoughtful. Without a doubt, those involved in hockey in British Columbia love the game and want to ensure that it is safe, fun and enjoyable for the tens of thousands of kids that play hockey at all levels. While it simply wasn't possible to include every comment and every recommendation that I collected in the four months I was involved in this project, I did appreciate and value the input I received.

One theme that was brought up at almost all of the forums was that there was a readiness for action - people did not want to have this report "sit on the Minister's shelf." From the initial comments I received from the B.C. Amateur Hockey Association and the Canadian Hockey Association - both of which gave me their full support of the project - and from some of the comments I heard from parents, coaches and officials at the forums, the hockey community is already looking at how they can enhance or develop fair play programs and place more emphasis on skill development.

Some of the issues we addressed on violence were discussed during hockey's open ice summit in Toronto (August 1999) resulting in recommendations which, supported by even more exposure through our SportSafe project, will help bring about constructive changes and at the very least, create an awareness of the issues. Furthermore, the Sport and Community Development Branch has committed resources to expand the provincial SportSafe program to develop tools for the broader sport community - tools which will reflect the findings and recommendations of this report.

Our basic message given at the forums was to emphasize fun. With competition comes a dimension of intensity, excitement and creativity, all key qualities. Hopefully they don't take away the additional qualities of having fun, developing skills and character in our young athletes.

Sport has survived many setbacks over the years but has persevered. I hope we can keep young people involved in their favourite game. This project also served to initiate public awareness on the positive values of amateur sport and having respect for the rules, other participants and the game itself. By taking a closer look at their involvement in sport, and how their attitudes, work ethics and energy to sport influences kids and their future on and off the ice, everyone who contributed to this report demonstrated their commitment and desire for positive change.

Finally, whenever we look at hard issues, or threats to the well-being and safety of our communities, there is a tendency to focus on negative aspects. Admittedly, our forums, surveys and interviews were not designed to collect feedback on the hundreds of thousands of committed, energetic and skilled people in hockey - the huge majority of coaches that volunteer their time on and off the ice and are healthy, positive role models; of parents who drive their kids to 5 a.m. practices and games and support them through good games and bad; of officials who are giving back to the sport they love and bring safety and fairness to the game; of league executives, organizations and volunteers who spent countless hours devoting their time and energy to making hockey safe, fun and a learning experience for B.C. kids and of course, of players, who no matter their expectations or aspirations, just want to do their best and have fun. This document does not report on the positive contribution these people make to hockey, but there's no doubt that it's because of their involvement, the sport will continue to thrive.

Footnotes

1. Survey respondents believe this to be true (see survey results in appendix 4), but as the literature review acknowledges in appendix 1, many of these causal theories are self-fulfilling prophecies.

2. University of Florida, College of Health and Human Performance *Keeping Fit* column #460, Patrick J. Bird, Ph.D. 1996.

3. Don Morris, in *Let's Give the Game Back to the Children* in the Journal of Physical Education and Recreation Vol 48 1977, recommends similar strategies for child skill development.

4. This player as a "commodity" theme was also echoed in Laura Robinson's *Crossing the Line - Violence and Sexual Assault in Canada's National Sport*. Robinson says the enticement of the NHL and the price tag placed on rising junior hockey stars places them above the law on and off the ice. See appendix 1.

5. *Hockey's violent collisions cause majority of injuries*, Oct. 26/99

6. *An epidemiological study of high school hockey injuries*, Gerberish SG, Finke R, Madden M. Childs Nervous System 1987: vol 3(2); p. 59-64

7. Canadian Medical Association Journal. March 21, 2000 Vol 162: 787-8

8. Canadian Medical Association Journal, March 21, 2000 Vol 162: 792-3

9. Another hypothesis comes from a Simon Fraser University criminologist, Ehor Boyanowsky, who has recently linked higher brain temperatures from wearing helmets to increased aggression. He suggests that when the brain is heated, the hypothalamus - an organ that regulates the body's temperature - produces adrenaline which might spark aggression.

10. A breakdown of BCAHA injuries reported to the Canadian Hockey Association can be found in Appendix 5

11. *'It just went badly,' McSorley says of Brashear.* Alan Adams. National Post. March 8/00

12. *Hockey's victims drop the gloves.* Paul Waldie. Globe and Mail. Feb. 4/99

13. *Stewards of Ice Hockey: A Historical Review of Safety Rules in Canadian Amateur Hockey,* Ronald C. Watson and Gregory D. Rickwood. Sport History Review 1999. Vol 30, 27-38

Appendix 1

The Root of Sport Aggression - an academic review

What is aggression? Aggression, which by definition leads to some type of violent behaviour, generally occurs when an individual becomes overwhelmed by an emotional response and can't seem to control his/her actions.

We are all born with aggressive tendencies - this is our instinct from our primitive past. It's whether these tendencies are used appropriately, or destructively, determines its acceptability.

According to Nathan Pollock, psychologist and assistant professor of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto, aggression originates from the limbic system - part of the brain that controls respiration, heartbeat and hormone secretion (adrenaline) and many of the emotional responses including anger and aggression. When the limbic system is very active, compared to the frontal lobes - which inhibits impulsive emotion - the limbic response overrides reason. Sport arouses participants. They are charged up - breathing increases, more blood is pumped to the organs and muscles, emotions run high - particularly when sports involve considerable contact between players.

Whether some athletes have a biological predisposition to violent aggression is not known, so researchers tend to focus on social or cultural conditioning to explain violent behaviour. Separating this limbic response from the game depends on players' attitudes towards and experience with violence.

Causes of Aggression

It is important to identify the causal theories behind aggression in order to understand what shapes aggressive behaviour and to develop interventions to address it. Sports aggression and violence have been the subject of extensive psychological and sociologist research and studies over the years. Behaviourists which include leading experts such as Canada's Michael Smith, Dorcas Susan Butt (University of British Columbia) and Gordon Russell (retired, formerly of University of Lethbridge) and University of California, Berkley's Brenda Jo Bredemeir have done pervasive research and countless studies on aggressive behaviour, its roots and motivation. The following is a brief summary of the considerable literature from these and other authors on prevailing theories on aggression.

Innate Theory

Freud viewed aggression as an inborn drive similar to sex or hunger and as with any drive it could be regulated through catharsis discharge. Likewise, Konrad Lorenz suggests that man's aggressive tendencies are inborn instinctual mechanisms inherited

from animal ancestors - animals can not survive without being aggressive - and sport allows for a socially acceptable way to discharge built-up aggression. The innate or instinctual theory has received very little support from researchers because of observations and studies which indicate that true aggression rarely leads to a catharsis. Instead, it leads to further aggression (see also catharsis theory).

This theory also doesn't allow for universal adherence (Alderman), particularly in those cases where some athletes don't display overly aggressive traits. This theory is better discussed as man being born with the capacity to aggress, and whose aggressive tendencies are developed and shaped through life experiences, sociocultural influences, reinforcements and rewards (see social learning theory) than though instinctual propensity.

Harbinger Theory

This theory allows that any major change in society would be reflected in sport - in particular, those sports enjoying mass participation and spectator appeal may provide the earliest and most valid signals of social change. Many behaviourists have looked as far back as during gladiator time - and even before - to explore the evolution of sport and aggression and its entrenchment in modern culture.

In the middle ages, sport generally developed as a form of doing battle (Smith). The lack of a strong central authority, as well as the pre-eminence of war permitted violence in sport that could be appalling today. The distinction between spectator and participant was very much blurred. Today, Smith suggests, violence tends to be a rationalized means of attaining goals than an outpouring of emotions.

Smith compares the popularity of sports and America's "major conflicts" between 1920 and 1960 and observed that in times of war-like conditions, the popularity of combative sports increased and vice versa.

A more recent investigation by Gordon W. Russell in 1991 tested similar mutual societal and sport influences. Russell tallied the aggressive penalties awarded in the 1930-31 National Hockey League season and thereafter at five-year intervals to the present. Following the 1930-31 season, aggression gradually declined through the years of World War II until shortly after 1945. Thereafter, aggression rose steeply reaching levels four times that of the immediate post-war years. In this hockey penalty review, Russell compared this upward trend to violent crime in the United States (through the Uniform Crime Rate) over the last 50 years. He found the similarities to be striking, differing only in respect to the year marking the upswing - as hockey's aggressive levels rose, this infliction was followed ten years later by an increase in the crime rate,

supporting a harbinger theory that sport - and its underlying values and beliefs system - may be signalling a reflective social change. This study didn't use Canadian crime figures, however, Russell notes that Canadian crime rates, while significantly lower than the United States, generally have followed the same trend.

Frustration-Aggression Theory

A popular theory in the 1940s and 1950s (Dollard) was that aggression is fuelled by frustration - that frustration results and is inevitable when one's efforts to reach a particular goal are blocked. This theory, though it is probably one of the most public widely-held explanation for aggression - particularly with the media - is not completely valid. Athletes encounter limitless situations of frustration during a contest - not all, if in fact any of these frustration leads to aggression. Furthermore, not all aggression is traced to some original frustration. Frustration, can however, produce a physiological arousal which thereby may create a readiness for aggression, or a pronounced emotion reaction. Frustration appears in many forms and is partly a function of how a single individual views a situation, and whether or not an individual reacts to frustration by exhibiting hostile behaviour may be due to one or more of many variables, including personality traits learned behaviour. In this respect, an athlete decides his or her own response to frustration, which may or may not be aggressive, depending on his or her values, attitudes and experiences - or simply, level of frustration.

A level, or form of frustration, could also be described as perceived injustice (Mark, Bryant and Lehman). Perceived injustice involves a discrepancy between what one believes should have happened and what actually happened. Perceived injustices are most likely to occur 1) when an individual believes that one of the rules of the game is inaccurately or unfairly applied or 2) when the individual believes that the rule of the game itself is unfair, even if it were implemented accurately and 3) when the individual feels unfairly deprived with respect to some outcome apart from the rules of the game - that is, through unfair denial of one's "rightful due." Most frustrations result in actions "within the rules of the game" and as such are less likely to lead to aggressive behaviour. It is the frustrations that are perceived as having stemmed from injustice which are most likely to provoke aggressiveness.

Some have theorized that competitive sports by their very nature produce frustration, but this would mean that the loser in most cases would always be the aggressor. Russell in a study of the Western Hockey League 1978-79 season refuted this generalization. The aggression measure in this study was the total minutes in penalties awarded a team for all rule violations of an aggressive nature. Teams winning handily

and those defeated by lopsided scores exhibited the highest levels of aggression. Therefore, contrary to a frustration-aggression prediction, those teams most severely thwarted in their goal of winning - that is, close games with one- or two-goal margins - engaged in the least amount of aggression. Russell describes a similar analysis (Wankel) of intercollegiate games which failed to reveal differences in player aggression between winning and losing teams, except for tied games which were characterized by significantly less aggression penalties.

In Crowd Size and Competitive Aspects of Ice Hockey, Russell and B.R. Drewy in 1976 studied a season of play in a seniors men's hockey league. Teams occupying first place displayed very little aggression, while teams in second place showed the greatest amount of on-ice aggression, with steadily decreasing levels as teams moved down the ranks.

This study, along with the WHL 1978-79 study, indicates that the frustration aggression theory can account for some behaviour, but is not always a precursor as such theorists would believe.

Catharsis Theory

The most persistent and pervasive belief is that sport allows athletes a vehicle to release their aggressive impulses. Even merely watching others act aggressively is presumed to provide spectators with similar opportunities. This belief in the catharsis effect of sport has been supported by studies ranging from J.C. Bennet's 1988 survey of schoolteachers, Michael Tarnok 1984 survey of grocery store patrons, Russell's 1983 survey of University of Lethbridge students (Russell).

Despite the widespread public acceptance of this theory, field studies suggest the opposite. Athletes' aggression - as the catharsis theory would predict - would be more prevalent in the early stages of the season and each individual game and would diminish in frequency and intensity. Series of studies comparing period to period in hockey reveals just the opposite trend (Russell - *Psychological Issues in Sports Aggression*). Richard Cox in *Sport Psychology - concepts and applications* likewise identified the tendency of penalties increasing as a game went on when he evaluated the structure of hockey games (e.g. point differential, league standings, visiting vs. home teams) in relation to aggressive trends. The idea of a player getting it out of his/her system doesn't work when you consider these documented trends.

Studies referenced in Russell's *The Social Psychology of Sport* showed the same results. Patterson (1974) compared hostility scores of physical education students and football players over a season of play. Where the students' hostility level remained unchanged during the season, the football players underwent a significant increase as the season progressed. A similar study (Husman, 1955) showed similar results with wrestlers.

Where catharsis theories might have an influence in aggressive behaviour may be in their ability to be self-fulfilling prophecies. The concept of self-fulfilling prophecies suggests that people's beliefs can shape their choices and outcomes of their action. A person may believe or expect something to happen, and this anticipation contributes to it coming true. Because people don't consult scientific journals to see that the catharsis theory has been general unfounded, they look to the media which often reports that catharsis is valid.

A study (Bushman, Baumeister & Stack, 1999) demonstrated media's influence on perpetuating catharsis as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Study subjects were given anti- and pro media endorsement messages in respect to catharsis. Participants were asked to hit a punching bag and then asked if they wanted to aggress against someone who had given them a low rank in grading a paper. The study also compared the level of aggression for participants who hit the punching bag with the level of aggression for those who did not. If the level of aggression was lower for the participants who hit the punching bag was longer, this would give support to aggression having a catharsis effect.

The results showed the participants who hit the bag were more aggressive, therefore refuting the theory of catharsis. Furthermore, participants who read a pro-catharsis message (claiming that aggressive action is a good way to relax and reduce anger) subsequently expressed a greater desire to hit a punching bag than participants who read anti-catharsis messages.

Social Learning

Today, the theory most widely-accepted by scholars and empirical research is the social learning theory. This concept, advanced mostly from the works of Albert Bandura, says aggressive behaviour may be learned from observing others and reinforced by rewards and punishments. Where aggression is seen to be successful and/or met with approval from others, this learning is greatly enhanced. This reinforcement may come from various sources including the athlete's immediate reference group (family, peers, coaches), the structure and rules of the game, and the attitude and behaviour of external influences such as professional athletes, spectators and media.

This learning requires a great deal of value judgement. People are not simply reactors to external influences, they select, organize and alter different stimuli according to what they feel is relevant to their own situation, or which behaviour would incite the greatest reward. Bandura describes the series of social learning processes as attentional, retention, motor reproduction and motivational (reinforcement or reward). Once these processes are complete, matching performances result.

Michael Smith, in *Significant Others' Influence on the Assaultive Behaviour of Young Hockey Players*, says much of violence in sport is socially rewarded behaviour where a "reference other" group sets the norms and values. Early in life, a child may find parents to be a large part of this normative reference group, but later, when a child is introduced into sport, coaches, peers and spectators are introduced into this "reference other" group. A player can either be influenced by what he or she observes (comparative reference other) from this reference other group, or from what he or she perceives (normative reference other) to be the reference others' attitudes.

Smith identifies this distinction - between observation and perception - through describing an experiment where viewers watch specific hockey plays on television and identified their enjoyment factor (Smith, *Violence in Sports*). The plays which were very rough elicited substantially higher enjoyment marks - even plays which were not-so-rough, but were described by the play-by-play broadcaster as rough - scored higher in the enjoyment factor. The experiment subjects were influenced by what they saw and perceived as enjoyment by virtue of the reaction of the crowd and the broadcasters. Similar results were found with situations which dealt with perceived hostility or hatred between opponent athletes.

It has been shown that parental behaviour which encourages and rewards aggression toward other children affects actual aggressive behaviour - that is, parents of aggressive adolescents condone or encourage aggression in their offspring more so than non-aggressive. The work of social learning theories demonstrates that children readily imitate entire patterns of aggressive behaviour observed directly or via media especially when the model is prestigeful or competent. This imitation even occurs if the observer dislikes the model's attributes, but sees value - social or material reward - for those actions. A social learning experiment (Bandura and Walters 1963) involved children at play observing an adult's interaction with a large plastic Bobo doll. One group of children watched aggressive behaviour, another group watched non-aggressive behaviour. Later, in a new setting, those watching the aggressive behaviour acted more aggressively and modelled their aggression (hitting the doll) after the adults'. If the aggressive actions by the observed adult were praised by another adult, the aggression later displayed by the children was greater still.

Smith, in his 1979 study of hockey violence, found a substantial correlation between players' perception on their parents' approval of violence and the number of self-reported hockey fights.

> Parents' attitudes and behaviours have a tremendous influence on the atmosphere surrounding sport, where they often get caught up in the excitement of the action, forgetting that sport is for the child's benefit not their entertainment. Influences of displays of poor sportsmanship by parents are difficult for even excellent coaches to overcome. Although most parents behave appropriately, horror stories of parents attacking, either verbally or physically, officials, coaches, players or other fans are too regularly occurring. Many parents, without realizing it, through their actions and words are directly training their child to act overly aggressive and violent. In fact, in some sports they openly approve of it, seeing fisticuffs as a "character building" tool. (Smith, Violence in Sports)

Through the subculture of sport, athletes draw on their reference other group to set their values and norms. Dr. Brenda Bredemeier of the University of California, Berkeley, refers to this as a form of "bracketed morality." The players' views and attitudes depend on what is acceptable and what they can get away with. Players "know" what they are doing when aggression occurs - it's just up to the players, coaches, officials, spectators - and in a general sense - the "history" of the game, to determine what's acceptable. This logic, for the most part, is different than that they would use in their everyday life. The regular rules of everyday life do not apply to the ice arena, the football field, the lacrosse box or other fields of play. Once these "norms" are established, what would often be seen as unacceptable, and even illegal, in the regular social setting, is treated as a "normal" occurrence in sports. Consequently, in order to reduce athletic aggression effectively, both external sport influences and internal reasoning mechanisms have to be addressed. That is, a player's own evaluation of what's right or wrong can be greatly influenced from external influences' actions, perceptions and reinforcements.

Reinforcements for specific behaviours can also be modelled after either competitive or co-operative approaches. While children can display competitive behaviour at an early age, it's only after they begin to appreciate the rules that govern winning or losing, to perceive success or failure or compare efforts amongst themselves that they recognize competitive behaviour. As competitive behaviour is rewarded positively - chiefly from adults - kids learn to accept the superior as the "winner" and increasingly become obsessed with his/her own winning status.

University of British Columbia sport psychologist Dorcas Susan Butt advocates a co-operative model of motivation over a competitive one. Performance level of a team, she believes, is lowered if an athlete's only wish is to beat his/her opponent because he or she will be satisfied with a performance that does just that, even if it is not his/her best. When the winning is everything philosophy prevails, it opens the door to cheating and aggressive behaviour, says Butt. In short, competition breeds more competition at the expense of other interaction, particularly in those sports where team efforts are paramount.

Robert C. Yeager, in *Seasons of Shame*, echoes Butt's remarks. He says that kids sports have been impacted by adults forcing their winning is everything attitudes on games. Kids, therefore, don't learn to have fun or how to demonstrate sportsmanship when they are playing by adult rules. He says this emphasis on winning and losing builds a system of mistrust - even in the school system where grades, fear of failure, ranking, etc. places the emphasis on winning and losing, rather than learning.

In building support for this theory, Yeager cites a study by psychologists Linden L. Nelson and Spencer Kagan comparing competition and co-operation among children. The researchers designed games in which the youngsters had to co-operate to win. Children were selected from various socio-economic backgrounds including Anglos, Mexican and Mexican-American backgrounds. The American children displayed excessively competitive behaviour and were more concerned with winning compared to the others. Given a choice, they tried to take toys away from their own partners in 87 per cent of the trials, even when it meant losing the toys for themselves. "The American competitive spirit may be alive and well, but it has produced a culture whose children are systematically irrational," said Nelson and Kagan. Children from Canada, Holland, Israel and Korea also exhibited similar tendencies.

Another study by Utah psychologists Donna Gelfand and Donald Hartman (cited in *Seasons of Shame*) exposed children to aggressive and non-aggressive role models. The results "clearly supported the view that competition promotes aggression, even above the heightened aggression generally caused by exposure to an aggressive model." A follow-up study showed that competitive tendencies were much stronger with adult supervision. Future, if adults verbally engaged in self-criticism and blame, so too did the children.

The Hockey Subculture

Applying the social learning theory to what many scholars refer to as the hockey subculture sees aggressive behaviour cultivated by winning at all costs attitudes and the structure of amateur hockey itself.

In *Crossing the Line*, Laura Robinson proposes that the subculture of junior hockey breeds anti-social behaviour through such things as overwhelming pressure from peers to participate in such acts (the mob mentality), taking young players away from home at early ages, the "idolization" of players (who are deemed to be above the law) and the attraction of playing in the National Hockey League. She argues that the NHL and Canadian Hockey Association victimizes players because the appeal of getting to the next level outweighs any moral or ethically reasoning - unacceptable behaviour becomes acceptable behaviour where much is at stake.

Edmund W. Vaz in *The Professionalism of Young Hockey Players* furthers this argument by saying that certain forms of violent behaviour and rule infractions are institutionalized among players in the minor hockey system - particularly through training and professionalism of the sport gradually turning youngsters into commodities. Furthermore, the NHL largely determines the style and content of the hockey that is played throughout the country, despite the fact that entering professional hockey is not in the cards for more than 99% of minor hockey players.

Vaz spent the 1969-70 winter gathering and recording observational, conversational and interview data to see how players and coaches in the Ontario Hockey Minor Hockey Association perceive the game. Through his observations, he found shooting skills have generally been reduced to offensive rushes and defensive slap shots, rather than systematic strategy of stickhandling - the "clutch and grab, dump the puck in" brand of hockey remained an important model for young players. This trend in style of play and the "acceptability" of rule infraction and violent behaviour, Vaz argues, help develop the established criteria for evaluation and selection when players are moving on to the next level of play. A failure to comply with this criterion seriously undermines the player's reputation and jeopardizes his chances of continuing at higher levels.

The significance of winning, says Vaz, is institutionalized at all levels of hockey, however, as the players advance to higher levels, the importance of team wins are diluted by personal gains. Players know what the scouts are looking for - individual aggressiveness, skill level - not the team's ability to win games. Coaches, on the other hand, as they move up in the system are increasingly concerned with winning the game - this concern comes before that of individual performances.

Vaz's observations during the study also indicated that coaches are quite casual about rule obedience - they are not as much concerned about illegitimate acts by their players, but the impact the penalties may have on the game. Penalties are regarded as

inevitable costs of the game - a good penalty is the successful effort to save a goal being scored; a bad penalty is one that achieves nothing. Vaz also found that the longer a player remains in hockey the less interested he is in playing the game according to the rules. As he moves through the system, a player soon recognizes that rule violations are considered skills to be used judiciously under specific conditions.

This instrumental aggression - aggression that serves as a means to achieve a particular goal - is often distinguished from hostile aggression, that is, actions intended to harm another who has angered or otherwise provoked an individual. Hostile aggression - fighting, deliberate attempts to injure - is seldom the sudden outburst of aggression that it appears to be in hockey. Fighting and bench-brawling incidents, says Vaz, are not the product of uncontrollable players; these players have undergone years of training and their conduct on the ice is disciplined and controlled.

> They know what they are doing. Fights, brawls and affiliated acts are accepted to the players under specific conditions. But to admit it is justifiable behaviour does not mean that we ought to consider it "natural" to the sport. It is learned behaviour and is functional for both players and the team. To understand anything less it to fail to comprehend both the formal and the informal rules that governs players' behaviour on the ice.
>
> Hockey culture is infused with long-established notions of how the game ought to be played - and since belligerence and aggressiveness are considered essential to the game and illegitimate tactics and deviant skills are included among the necessary criteria for player evaluation and selection - infraction of the rules and violence are unavoidable.
>
> *The Professionalism of Young Hockey Players, Edmund W. Vaz*

Appendix 2

Phases of SportSafe Violence Prevention Program Development

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Following the example of SportSafe's harassment and abuse module, and using amateur hockey as its focus, provide sport organizations with tools to address violence in sport.
- Determine the level of violence in amateur hockey and trends in past few years.
- Review other jurisdictions [provinces and countries] and sports seeking examples of how violence in sports have been addressed.
- Determine public perception of the problem (i.e. violence in amateur hockey).
- Review British Columbia Amateur Hockey Association's actions to address violence in amateur hockey and its success.
- Support the British Columbia Amateur Hockey Association's efforts to shift the culture of hockey to one that places more emphasis on skill development and fun, and diminishes acceptance of violence in hockey.
- Expand the SportSafe program to address other social issues (abuse and violence being the first two issues).
- Create a safer environment for children and young people in sport.

PHASE I - CONSULTATION

Objectives:

- To gather regional information
- To determine public perception of violence
- To provide public with an opportunity to contribute to program development (through consultation)

1. Public Forums

A project leader will hold public forums in up to eight communities in British Columbia.

Project leader will accept oral and written submissions, but would ask key questions in order to gather consistent information regionally.

Timeline - January - February 2000

2. Interviews

The project advisor will also conduct one-on-one interviews with parents, players, coaches, officials, league executives, referees, Sport Medicine Council of B.C. (e.g. sports physicians), professional hockey players, sports psychologists/sociologists. Line of questioning to include perception of violence, whether players feel pressure to fight, how much is fighting/violence a part of the game.

Timeline - December 1999 - February 2000 (and in conjunction with public hearings)

3. Surveys

Confidential surveys to parents, participants, coaches, officials and others involved in amateur hockey will be distributed prior to, and collected at the public forums. These surveys will also be available in PDF format at www.sport.gov.bc.ca

The survey will help measure causes, attitudes and experiences in respect to violence in hockey which will provide direction in developing violence prevention tools. Findings will be summarized in the project leader report.

Timeline - January - March 2000

PHASE II - Compile Supporting Data Objectives:

- To review trends and status quo (to be used as support to program's objectives and also for future program evaluation).

- To ensure appropriate research is undertaken to support project leader in compiling report.

- Sport and Community Development branch will be responsible for supporting data compilation (by staff or contract).

Data to include:

- Literature review of sport violence / aggression
- Case studies of violence in sport (specifically hockey, but not limited to)
- Number of incidents (in B.C. specifically)
- Clinical data (in respect to injuries and death)
- Review of European models of amateur hockey, specifically youth development and European attitudes towards hockey violence.
- Data to support trends (i.e. escalating incidents, or acceptance of violence in other sports and other social contexts)
- Review of other factors which may contribute to violence in sport - e.g. skill development, practice versus competition ratios, social attitudes, traditions

Timeline - November 1999 to March 2000

PHASE III - REPORT PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION

The project leader, using information from public consultation and data compilation, with the assistance of Sport and Community Development Branch, will report findings and recommendations for action in a written report to be presented to the Sport Minister and the British Columbia Amateur Hockey Association.

Timeline - March / May 2000

PHASE IV - Implementation of report recommendations and development of SportSafe Module II - Addressing Violence in Sport.

Similar to SportSafe harassment and abuse module, a program to address violence in sport will be developed based on the recommendations of the project leader's report. Action items could include brochures, posters, policy changes, and public awareness campaign through partnerships with British Columbia Amateur Hockey Association and the private sector (e.g. for television ads, print material).

Timeline - June to September 2000

Appendix 3

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Appendix 4

Survey Measurements and Results

Note: "violence" is based on definition described in survey.

Key of this survey is to help determine causes and influences of violence in hockey and appropriate tools to help address these causes (e.g. is aggression/violence social learning, and if so, what tools would help shift this social learning). Attitudes, normative reference group, experiences – all shape social learning.

Attitude

1. What is respondent's value system (i.e. what are the important values in hockey)?
2. What is respondent's current attitude and belief about violence in hockey? Is it an issue?
3. What does the respondent feel are the causes, influences in respect to violence in hockey?
4. What shapes/causes/contributes to respondent's attitudes about violence in hockey?

Experience

1. Is respondent's value system appropriately reflected in his/her experiences?
2. What is respondent's experience with violence in hockey?
3. What shapes/causes/contributes to respondent's experiences with violence in hockey?
4. What is the "control system" (e.g. peers, coaches, external influences, officials, parents, etc) and how much influence do they have/should they have on the game?
5. What reinforces / rewards aggression or violence?

Recommendations

1. How can respondent's value system be better reflected in his/her experiences?

2. What tools are necessary to shift social learning?

3. How could "control system" (i.e. factors which influence social learning) be better managed?

4. Are reinforcement / rewards for aggression or violence appropriate, and if not, how can they be change?

5. What practices are positive and how can they be enhanced?

Hockey Violence
Experience and Attitude Survey

General Survey

1. Are you (check one):
196 Players (74 females; 122 males)
36 Coaches
22 Referee/Linesperson
95 Parent/Spectator
2 Volunteer
2 Administrator/Executive

352 total

2. Your age (or age of the players in the level of hockey you are involved with): did not tabulate

3. Are you **223** Male **129** Female

4. Where do you live? (community): did not tabulate

5. Do you believe that violent behaviour in the level of hockey you are involved in is:
82 Rare (of which 1 is female player)
208 Occasional (of which 40 are female players)
63 Frequent (of which 20 are female players)

6. Over the last few years, do you believe that violence in sports is:
23 Lessening
149 About the same
181 Getting worse

7. Are you concerned about the level of violence in hockey (or other sports)?
174 Yes (7 out of 22 referees; 33 of 121 male players; 72 of 98 parents; 36 of 74 female; 22 of 36 coaches)
179 No (15 out of 22 referees; 89 of 122 male players; 23 of 98 parents; 38 of 74 female; 14 of 36 coaches)

8. How strongly do you believe in the statement that "violence is part of the game"?
134 Don't believe at all
177 Somewhat True
42 Believe Strongly
23 male players said don't believe at all; 80 said somewhat true; 19 said believe strongly
27 coaches said don't believe at all; 8 said somewhat true; 1 coach said believe strongly

9. Some players use violence or aggression to "take another player out." Is that okay?
49 Yes (9 parents; 13 female; 1 coach; 3 refs; 23 males)
304 No (86 parents; 61 female; 35 coach; 19 refs; 99 males)

10. A) Who do you believe has the most "control" over a hockey game:
113 Players (42 male; 9 refs; 8 coaches; 40 female; 14 parents)
80 Coaches (11 male; 7 ref; 15 coaches; 8 female; 39 parents)
144 Referee or linesperson (63 male; 5 ref; 12 coaches; 23 female; 41 parents)
16 Other (everyone) 4 male; 1 ref; 4 female; 7 parents

B) Who do you believe should have the most "control" over a hockey game?
94 Players (19 parents; 24 female; 40 male; 7 coach; 4 ref)
60 Coaches (28 parents; 4 female; 10 male; 14 coach; 4 ref)
181 Referee or linesperson (51 parents; 41 female; 66 male; 12 coach; 11 refs)
19 Other (everyone) (3 parents; 5 remale; 5 male; 3 coach; 3 refs)

11. What factors do you feel contribute to the level of violent behaviour. In the box provided, please grade the factors accordingly:
0 = is not a factor
1 = contributes a little
2 = contributes moderately
3 = contributes strongly (only "3 - contributes strongly" was tabulated in results below)

53 Rules and Regulations (e.g. length of penalties)
148 Lack of enforcement of Rules and Regulations
154 Coaches' Behaviour / Attitude
117 Belief that violence is "part of the game"
48 Peer Pressure
82 Parents/spectators' attitudes and behaviour
52 Players lack skating/playing skills
101 Role models (National Hockey League, Junior/national players)
191 Reacting to opposing team's violent behaviour
55 Media coverage of NHL
69 "Professional" Sport Role Models outside of hockey (e.g. wrestling, other sports)
59 Age of players
53 Size of players
80 Feeling that aggressiveness is necessary to move to next level of hockey
168 Player frustration
191 Retaliation (e.g. cheap shots)
80 Societal acceptance of violence
14 Games versus practice ratio
Comments: only contributes strongly were tabulated. Players were more likely to say frustration, retaliation and reacting to opposing team's violent behaviour.

12. From the factors listed in question 11 (or under "others"), which three, in your opinion, are the major causes of violence in hockey (with #1 being the biggest cause).
Not tabulated, use above figures.

13. Do you believe that banning body checking play in the peewee leagues encourage / discourage violence at later stages of hockey? (Circle one)
Coaches: 20 encourage, 9 discourage, 7 not sure or no effect
Females: 31 encourage, 35 discourage, 8 not sure or no effect
Parents: 40 encourage, 35 discourage, 24 not sure or no effect
Male: 62 encourage, 35 discourage, 25 not sure or no effect
Officials: 13 encourage, 5 discourage, 4 not sure or no effect

Total: **166** encourage; **119** discourage; **68** not sure or no effect

14. At what age do you believe body checking should be introduced in hockey? _____
110 male said pee wee, atom or right away (compared to bantam and higher or never)
65 parents
28 female
34 coaches
16 referees
Total 253

15. How much do you enjoy watching fighting:
a) At the NHL level:
60 Hate it (5 male players; 8 coaches; 2 female players; 45 parents; 0 refs)
169 Indifferent (44 male players; 26 coaches; 46 female players; 46 parents; 7 refs)
124 Love it (73 male players; 2 coaches; 26 female players; 8 parents; 15 refs)

b) At the Minor level:
172 Hate it (30 male players; 26 coaches; 21 female players; 84 parents; 11 referees)
124 Indifferent (61 male players; 9 coaches; 36 female players; 13 parents; 5 referees)
57 Love it (31 male players; 1 coach; 17 female players; 2 parents; 6 referees)

16. Have you ever encouraged fighting (e.g. through cheering) (you may check more than one):
175 While watching NHL on television (86 male; 27 parents; 39 female; 8 coaches; 15 refs)
123 While watching NHL in person (61 male; 10 parents; 28 female; 9 coaches; 15 refs)
70 While watching Minor Hockey (43 male; 1 parent; 20 female; 1 coach; 5 refs)
139 Never (21 none; 71 parents; 21 female; 23 coaches; 3 refs)

17. Do you believe that fighting (you may check more than one):
42 Makes a player tougher (Coach-1; Ref-2; Female player-9; Male player-25; Parent-5)
63 Improves his/her chances of getting to the next level of hockey (C-6; R-7; F-5; M-24; P-21)
141 Allows a player to "let off some steam" (C-9; R-10; F-31; M-67; P-24)
36 Is harmless (C-1; R-3; F-6; M-21; P-5)
55 Is a necessary part of the game (C-4; R-8; F-7; M-26; P-10)
56 Makes for a better game (C-1; R-7; F-13; M-30; P-5)
123 None of the above (C-17; R-2; F-27; M-22; P-55)

18. In the box provided, please record a number (from below) which best describes how much you feel the factor contributes to a player displaying aggressive behaviour:
0 = is not a factor
1 = contributes a little
2 = contributes moderately
3 = contributes strongly (only "3 - contributes strongly was tabulated in the following results)

188 A player wanting to protect his/her team or goalie
224 A player lacking discipline
16 A player's mistake
122 A player being instructed to do so by his/her coach
95 A player's "role" on the team
178 A player lacking respect for rules/teammates
191 A player using his/her stick as a weapon
44 Spectator or fan reaction
74 Other influences (e.g. coaches, peers, parents...)

19. Do you know any players that have left the sport because of the level of violence or the fear of getting hurt?
234 No
119 Yes

20. At the level of hockey you are involved in, who is currently setting a positive role model for the players (you may check off more than one box):

167 Parents (P-61; M-57; F-29; R-5; C-15)
269 Coach (P-81; M-94; F-44; R-18; C-32)
134 Other players (P-32; M-48; F-32; R-10; C-12)
87 Referee or linesperson (P-23; M-25: F-13; R-15; C-11)
85 NHL or National Team players (P-11; M-51; F-18; R-0; C-5)
24 Others_____ (P-6; M-5; F-4; R-4; C-5)
(A few of the respondents when checking boxes said "some of them" – these were recorded as positive) "Others" included Kamloops Blazers, Kamloops Minor Hockey Association, local associations, Wayne Gretzky, family, teachers, basketball players, executive, family, my self respect.

21. What measures do you feel need to be introduced/enhanced in order to curb violence in hockey? Using numbers one to three, with one being the most important, which ones would have the most impact? (you can use a number more than once).

Changing game rules and regulations
Total 1 – 67; 2 – 83; 3 – 129
Adults 1 – 35; 2 – 31; 3 – 62

Stronger enforcement of rules and regulations
Total 1- 175; 2 – 81; 3 – 36
Adults 1 – 106; 2 – 25; 3 – 10

Training, education and awareness of impact of violence in sports
Total 1 – 153; 2 – 99; 3 – 31
Adults 1 – 85; 2 – 38; 3 – 12

For coaches
Total 1 – 152; 2 – 91; 3 – 24
Adults 1 – 96; 2 – 33; 3 – 5

For officials
Total 1 – 141; 2 – 85; 3 – 32
Adults 1 – 83; 2 – 35; 3 – 17

For players
Total 1 – 167; 2 – 80; 3 – 26
Adults 1 – 99; 2 – 38; 3 – 7
For parents / fans
Total 1 – 131; 2 – 78; 3 – 50
Adults 1 – 83; 2 – 33; 3 – 14

More emphasis on skill development or fundamentals of game
Total 1 – 139; 2 – 114; 3 – 35
Adults 1 – 73; 2 – 48; 3 – 16

More emphasis on fair play
Total 1 – 142; 2 – 118; 3 – 32
Adults 1 – 85; 2 – 41; 3 – 15

Less emphasis on winning
Total 1 – 88; 2 – 112; 3 – 71
Adults 1 – 48; 2 – 49; 3 – 34

More practices, less games
Total 1 – 45; 2 – 73; 3 – 142
Adults 1 – 16; 2 – 35; 3 – 75

Stronger or different league rules (e.g. in respect to suspensions, game ejections, disciplinary actions)
Total 1 – 132; 2 – 100; 3 – 42
Adults 1 – 76; 2 – 39; 3 – 13

More pressure on media to promote positive values and behaviour
Total 1 – 1265; 2 – 95; 3 – 58
Adults 1 – 73; 3 – 33; 3 – 26

More pressure on professional sports to promote positive values and behaviour
Total 1 – 142; 2 – 88; 3 – 46
Adults 1 – 84; 2 – 27; 3 – 21

Other. Please specify: Two ref system, older refs, player lifeskill training, more emphasis on social development, parent meeting with coach at beginning of season, have injured player speak to players, coaches, etc about impact.

Survey Instruction Sheet and Consent Form

The B.C. government's Sport and Community Development Branch, in partnership with the B.C. Amateur Hockey Association, is conducting surveys in various regions of the province. The surveys will collect information on the scope of, and attitudes and beliefs surrounding violence in hockey, which will help the province develop a violence prevention module as part of its SportSafe program (SportSafe's first module was preventing harassment and abuse in sport).

Parents, coaches, officials and participants at all levels of amateur hockey are being asked to complete the surveys. Participation is completely voluntary and all information will be held confidential – applicants' names will not appear anywhere on the questionnaire so that they can not be associated with any responses. The results of the survey, along with information collected from public forums on this subject, will be published in a report to the provincial government and the B.C. Amateur Hockey Association sometime in the spring of 2000. Bernie Pascall, a veteran sports broadcaster who has been involved in hockey for many years, will be leading forum discussions and preparing the report.

Parents, coaches and officials are asked to fill out the "General" survey. The general survey is optional for players – the questions in the general survey may be too advanced for younger players, however, they are encouraged to fill out the "participant's survey" which has been designed for players of all ages.

Coaches and officials are also asked to fill out their respective surveys. Participants should fill out the survey alone so that they are not influenced by other people, however, parents can help their sons or daughters fill out the survey if necessary.

The survey is also available in PDF format through the sport branch's website (www.sport.gov.bc.ca/ssafe.htm) should other members of your family or other people in your community wish to participate (only one survey per person, please).

Surveys will be collected by your team's coach (you may put the surveys in a sealed envelope if you wish) and mailed to the Sport and Community Development Branch in Victoria, or collected at the public forums in Quesnel, Prince George, Kamloops, Castlegar, Vancouver, Nanaimo and Victoria.

Surveys (distributed by your team or obtained through the website) can also be faxed to (250) 387-1407 in Victoria. Written or emailed (sent to sportsafe@gems6.gov.bc.ca) submissions are also welcome – the deadline for submissions is March 11.

Consent

I have read this form and understand that participation in this study is voluntary and confidential. (If applicable) By returning this completed survey, I give consent for my son/daughter to participate in this study. (To preserve confidentiality, signatures are not required).

Participant's Survey

215 surveys were turned in though some were incomplete (will be noted appropriately in specific sections)

1. How old are you? _____

2. Do you like rough play or fighting in hockey?
Yes – **96**; No – **39**; Sometimes (or liked rough play but not fighting) – **74**; Did not respond - **3**

3. What do you enjoy the most in hockey?
58 - team aspect, friendship and/or fun
26 - fighting or checking aspects;
34 - "just playing" or "everything";
26 - skill and finesse;
37 - scoring or winning;
13 - speed and intensity;
20 did not answer.

4. Using the numbers one to three, please select a number which best describes the importance to you (you can use a number more than once):
1 – Not important
2 – Important
3 – Really important

1 = 36; 2 = 99; 3 = 79 Scoring goals
1 = 181; 2 = 25; 3 = 6 Fighting
1 = 0; 2 = 30; 3 = 182 Learning to play / new skills
1 = 0; 2 = 26; 3 = 186 Improving your skills
1 = 32; 2 = 80; 3 = 100 Not getting hurt
1 = 15; 2 = 107; 3 = 90 Doing drills
1 = 6; 2 = 53; 3 = 153 Getting physically fit
1 = 20; 2 = 84; 3 = 108 Being with your friends / making new friends
1 = 94; 2 = 90; 3 = 34 Impressing your coach
1 = 110; 2 = 72; 3 = 30 Impressing your parents
1 = 0; 2 = 28; 3 = 184 Having fun
1 = 12; 2 = 71; 3 = 149 Playing fair
1 = 59; 2 = 78; 3 = 73 Making the all-star or provincial team
1 = 22; 2 = 68; 3 = 122 Making it to the next level of hockey
1 = 104; 2 = 47; 3 = 61 Playing in the NHL
1 = 3; 2 = 59; 3 = 155 Having respect for the game, its rules and other players

5. Using the numbers one to three, please select a number which best describes the importance of your team (you can use a number more than once):
1 – Not important
2 – Important
3 – Really important
2 did not answer
1 = 20; 2 = 109; 3 = 84 Winning the game
1 = 133; 2 = 66; 3 = 14 Losing the game
1 = 17; 2 = 94; 3 = 102 Making it to the playoffs
1 = 15; 2 = 68; 3 = 130 Playing fair

6. Using the numbers one to three, please select a number which best describes the importance of you respecting (you can use a number more than once):
1 – Not important
2 – Important
3 – Really important

1 = 11; 2 = 81; 3 = 119 the referee and officials
1 = 1; 2 = 34; 3 = 175 your coach
1 = 1; 2 = 35; 3 = 176 your teammates
1 = 13; 2 = 111; 3 = 86 other players
1 = 0; 2 = 57; 3 = 153 the game of hockey and its rules

7. What do you admire most in your favourite NHL players? (could check more than one)
169 Overall skills
75 Ability to score goals
36 Ability to skate
31 Ability to fight
25 Role as "enforcer" (using too much physical force)
60 "Toughness"
14 Other:role model, leadership, fair play

8. Do you watch a lot of hockey on television?
163 Yes **49** No
3 did not answer

Are you watching more or less hockey on television than in other years? **115** More **97** Less
Why? More generally said to learn from players' skills; less generally said because they were too busy.

9. Have you ever learned to hit another player illegally by watching a NHL player?
58 Yes **153** No
4 did not answer

10. How many penalties in a season do you usually get for:

(3 and under; or didn't respond) (4 to 8) 9 and over

Tripping 163 (3 and under; or didn't respond); 38 (4 to 8 minutes); 14 (9 minutes or more)
Interference 172 (3 and under; or didn't respond); 32 (4 to 8 minutes); 11 (9 minutes or more)
Cross Checking 188 (3 and under; or didn't respond); 18 (4 to 8 minutes); 9 (9 minutes or more)
High Sticking 204 (3 and under; or didn't respond); 7 (4 to 8 minutes); 4 (9 minutes or more)
Checking from behind 212 (3 and under; or didn't respond); 2 (4 to 8 minutes); 1 (9 min. or more)
Fighting 212 (3 and under; or didn't respond); 2 (4 to 8 minutes); 1 (9 minutes or more)
Checking from behind (game misconduct) 212 (3 and under; or didn't respond); 2 (4 to 8 minutes); 1 (9 minutes or more)

11. Have you ever:
22 Started a fight
83 Participated in a fight
18 Been told to fight

12. Why did you start / participate in the fight(s)? **Mostly anger or retaliation.**

13. Have you ever been injured in hockey because another player got too rough (e.g. fighting, high sticking, etc.)? If so, how were you injured?
93 Yes (ranging from concussions to neck injuries; slashed wrists and ankles)
199 no
3 did not answer

14. Have you ever wanted to stop playing hockey / get off the ice because the game got too rough?
33 Yes **178** No

15. Have your parents ever wanted you to stop playing hockey / get off the ice because the game got too rough?
34 Yes **177** No
Comments A few mentioned that their parents liked the roughness.

16. Do you ever feel pressured or encouraged to fight / or hurt someone / be rough?
14 By your coach
64 By other members of your team
76 By the opposing team
18 By parents/spectators
13 By what you see/hear on television
1 Others (please specify) said referee's non-calls encouraged him

17. Does your coach teach you about what is right and wrong behaviour in sport? Do you feel he/she should do more of this teaching?

80 said coach is teaching what is right and wrong behaviour and should do more
110 said coach is teaching what is right and wrong behaviour but shouldn't do more
11 said coach is not teaching what is right and wrong, but should
7 said coach is not teaching what is right and wrong, but shouldn't

18. An "enforcer" is a player who uses too much force against other players and is often used to "take out" opponents. Do you think of yourself as an "enforcer?"
18 identified themselves as enforcers.

19. If you answered "yes" in question 18, why do you like being an enforcer?
Most said there were expected to be enforcer because of their size; one didn't like this role; most enjoyed this role because they liked fighting or hitting.

20. Have you ever been "bullied" in a hockey game by an enforcer? If so, how did you feel?
63 said they had been bullied by an enforcer; of which 25 didn't like this (were angry, upset or fearful); 10 wanted to retaliate or enjoyed retaliating; the others didn't specify feelings.

21. Do you believe that there are "good penalties"? If so, what are they?
156 said that there are good penalities – in general, these are ones which prevent breakaways, goals or protect another player.

22. Has your coach ever asked you to take a "good penalty"?
68 said yes

23. Using the numbers one to three, please select a number which best describes what you think your coach feels is the most important thing in a player. (you can use a number more than once):
1 – Not important
2 – Important
3 – Really important
1 = 11; 2 = 61; 3 = 121 Overall skills
1 = 36; 2 = 116; 3 = 41 Ability to score goals
1 = 15; 2 = 71; 3 = 107 Ability to skate
1 = 174; 2 = 14; 3 = 5 Ability to fight
1 = 153; 2 = 34; 3 = 6 Role as "enforcer"
1 = 8; 2 = 27; 3 = 158 Determination
1 = 4; 2 = 20; 3 = 169 Wanting to play
1 = 9; 2 = 81; 3 = 103 Knowledge of game
1 = 63; 2 = 92; 3 = 38 "Toughness"
1 = 8; 2 = 16; 3 = 169 Being a team player
1 identified lifeskills; 4 identifed fun; 3 identified fair play; and 1 identified bodychecking under "Other"

24. Do you think your parents would approve of a player punching another player if they were (you can check off more than one box):
18 made fun of
41 threatened
21 shoved
94 punched
141 protecting a teammate

25. Do you think your coach would approve of a player punching another player if they were:
14 made fun of
24 threatened
20 shoved
64 punched
142 protecting a teammate

26. Do you think your teammates would approve of a player punching another player if they were:
52 made fun of
68 threatened
69 shoved
129 punched
175 protecting a teammate

Coach's Survey

22 respondents

1. What age are the players that you coach? _____

2. Do you believe that aggression / violence / rough play should be used as a playing strategy?
3 Yes **16** No

3. In general, do you encourage / discourage fighting (circle one) and why?
1 encourage; **21** discourage

4. What do you enjoy the most in coaching?

5. Using the numbers one to three, please select a number which best describes the importance you place (or encourage) with your players (you can use a number more than once):
1 – Not important
2 – Important
3 – Really important

1 = 3; 2 = 16; 3 = 3 Scoring goals
1 = 22 Fighting
2 = 1; 3 = 21 Learning to play / new skills
2 = 1; 3 = 21 Improving their skills
1 = 1; 2 = 9; 3 = 12 Not getting hurt
2 = 10; 3 = 12 Doing drills
2 = 9; 3 = 13 Getting physically fit
2 = 5; 3 = 17 Being with their friends / making new friends
1 = 20; 2 = 2 Impressing you
1 = 20; 2 = 2 Impressing their parents
2 = 1; 3 = 21 Having fun
2 = 3; 3 = 19 Playing fair
1 = 14; 2 = 8 Making the all-star or provincial team
1 = 9; 2 = 10; 3 = 3 Making it to the next level of hockey
1 = 19; 2 = 1; 3 = 1 Playing in the NHL
2 = 1; 3 = 21 Having respect for the game, its rules and other players

6. Using the numbers one to three, please select a number which best describes the importance of your team (you can use a number more than once):
1 – Not important
2 – Important
3 – Really important

Winning the game **1 = 7; 2 = 13; 3 = 1**
Losing the game **1 = 14; 2 = 7; 3 = 0**
Making it to the playoffs **1 = 13; 2 = 7; 3 = 1**
Playing fair **1 = 0; 2 = 4; 3 = 17**

7. Using the numbers one to three, please select a number which best describes what you look for in most players (you can use a number more than once):
1 – Not important
2 – Important
3 – Really important

2 = 7; 3 = 15 Overall skills
1 = 5; 2 = 13; 3 = 3 Ability to score goals
2 = 6; 3 = 16 Ability to skate
1 = 21; 2 = 1 Ability to fight
1 = 21; 2 = 1 Role as "enforcer"
1 = 1; 3 = 21 Determination
2 = 1; 21 = 3 Wanting to play
1 = 1; 2 = 14; 3 = 7 Knowledge of game
1 = 11; 2 = 8; 3 = 3 "Toughness"
3 = 22 Being a team player

8. What type of coach best describes you (you can check off more than one box):
17 Positive role model
21 Focused on skill development
1 Promotes aggressive play
17 Promotes having fun over winning games
0 Promotes winning games over having fun

9. Do you believe that there are "good penalties"? If so, do you encourage your players to take these penalties?
15 Yes **7** No
Only three may encourage for some situations

10. Ranking in order 1 to 4 (with #1 being the most), how much control or influence do the following people have on violent behaviour in hockey?
1 = 11; 2 = 6; 3 = 1 Players
1 = 12; 2 = 5; 3 = 4; 4 = 1 Coaches
1 = 7; 2 = 8; 3 = 2 Referees/Linesmen
1 = 4; 2 = 4; 3 = 6; 4 = 5 League officials
1 = 5; 2 = 6; 3 = 2; 4 = 5 Media
1 = 8; 2 = 6; 3 = 2; 4 = 4 Parents

11. How many penalty minutes for violent behaviour does your team average in a season, and how does this compare with other teams in your league?
Averaged fairly low compared to others.

12. Do you teach your players about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in sport? Do you feel you should do more of this?
22 said yes – most would do more

13. In general, do you
0 Encourage your players to fight
19 Discourage your players from fighting
13 Let your players know how you feel about fighting (either way)

14. Do you feel you have the tools to promote fair play / non-violent behaviour? **19** said yes

15. What tools would you suggest would best help you promote fair play / non-violent behaviour? Would best help others?
Two-referee system
Media and role models
Zero tolerance for suspensions
Clinics on emotional, social needs, conflict resolution
Respect clinics
Compliance at all levels
Videos showing acceptable and unacceptable behaviour

16. Other Comments (if insufficient room, please attach):
Consistent referees, introducing body checking

Referee / Officials survey

26 respondents

1. What level (age of participants) of hockey do you officiate? _____

2. What are the values which guide your officiating most? (e.g. safety, fairness) Or what is your general philosophy in officiating?
Fair play and safety was number one response

3. When you officiate, how do you generally handle rough play or fighting (e.g. do you stop it right away? Let the players work it out? Depends on the game situation?)
17 said they stop it right away
9 – work it out, or depends on situation and level of hockey
one mentioned using preventative strategies to alleviate escalation of aggression.

4. What do you enjoy the most about officiating in hockey?
Responses included giving back to the game, watching players move through the ranks. One said breaking up scrums.

5. Ranking in order 1 to 4 (with #1 being the most), how much control or influence do the following people have on violent behaviour in hockey?
1 = 13; 2 = 4; 3 = 6; 1 = 1 Players
1 = 15; 2 = 7; 3 = 1; 4= 1 Coaches
1 = 2; 2 = 11; 3 = 6; 4 = 3 Referees/Linesmen
1 = 2; 2 = 1; 3 = 7; 4 = 9 League officials
1 = 2; 2 = 1; 3 = 4; 4 = 8 Media
1 = 4; 2 = 8; 3 = 2; 4 = 7 Parents

6. Do you receive enough support from other officials/your officials association/league officials in respect to enforcing infractions? Please comment

20 said lots of support
2 said most of the time
2 said little support
2 didn't answer

7. In general, do you feel you (and other referees/linepersons) have the respect and support of coaches, players, fans?
16 Yes **10** No

8. As an official, have you ever been a victim of violent behaviour in hockey?
10 Never
12 Occasionally
2 Moderately
1 Frequently

9. As an official, have you ever been injured in hockey as a result of hockey violence? If so, how often and what was the nature of injury?
3 said yes

10. Have you ever stopped a game because it got too rough? **0** Yes **26** No

11. Have you ever been pressured to stop a game because it got too rough? **2** Yes **23** No

12. Have you ever been instructed, or felt pressure to call a game a certain way (e.g. during playoffs, because of teams' past history) **14** Yes **11** No / one didn't respond

13. If you answered yes to question 12, has this instruction or pressure affected how you call the game?
7 Never **0** Always **9** Sometimes / **10** didn't answer

14. Do you feel you have the tools to promote non-violent behaviour or enforce the rules in respect to violence?
All said yes. One suggested more support from parents, 1 said players need more self control and one said league officials fall short.

What tools do you feel would help?
clear guidelines,
more support from BCAHA for young officials,
linesmen to call minor infractions,
stiffer suspensions
support from coaches
education
eduation for parents
more respect
more control over length of suspensions
CHA – more video instruction on infractions

15. Other comments (from an official's perspective) on violence in hockey: (if insufficient room in the space below, please attach comments to this survey)

One official referenced Searching for Bobby Fischer movie – parents were removed from the game and locked in a basement room. Players cheered. Same thing should happen at hockey games.

Appendix 5

BCAHA Injury Report Excerpt

B.C. Hockey Association Accident Counts (reported to CHA)

*** injuries listed below are not complete injury count, but ones which could be attributed to illegal tactics.**

1996-97

Check from Behind	6
Checked in Open Ice	3
Checked into Boards	18
Collision with Opponents	25
Hit by Stick	42
Total	**94**

1997-98

Check from Behind	3
Checked in Open Ice	4
Checked into Boards	22
Collision with Opponents	34
Hit by Stick	43
Total	**106**

1998-99

Check from Behind	3
Checked in Open Ice	11
Checked into Boards	21
Collision with Opponents	31
Hit by Stick	47
Total	**113**

1999-2000 (up until May 12, 2000)

Check from Behind	4
Checked in Open Ice	5
Checked into Boards	16
Collision with Opponents	18
Hit by Stick	29
Total	**72**

PEANUTS
I'M DOING AN ARTICLE ON VIOLENCE IN SPORTS...
IS THERE ANYTHING THAT YOU THINK MIGHT HELP CUT DOWN THE VIOLENCE?
SMAK!
MORE KISSING!

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